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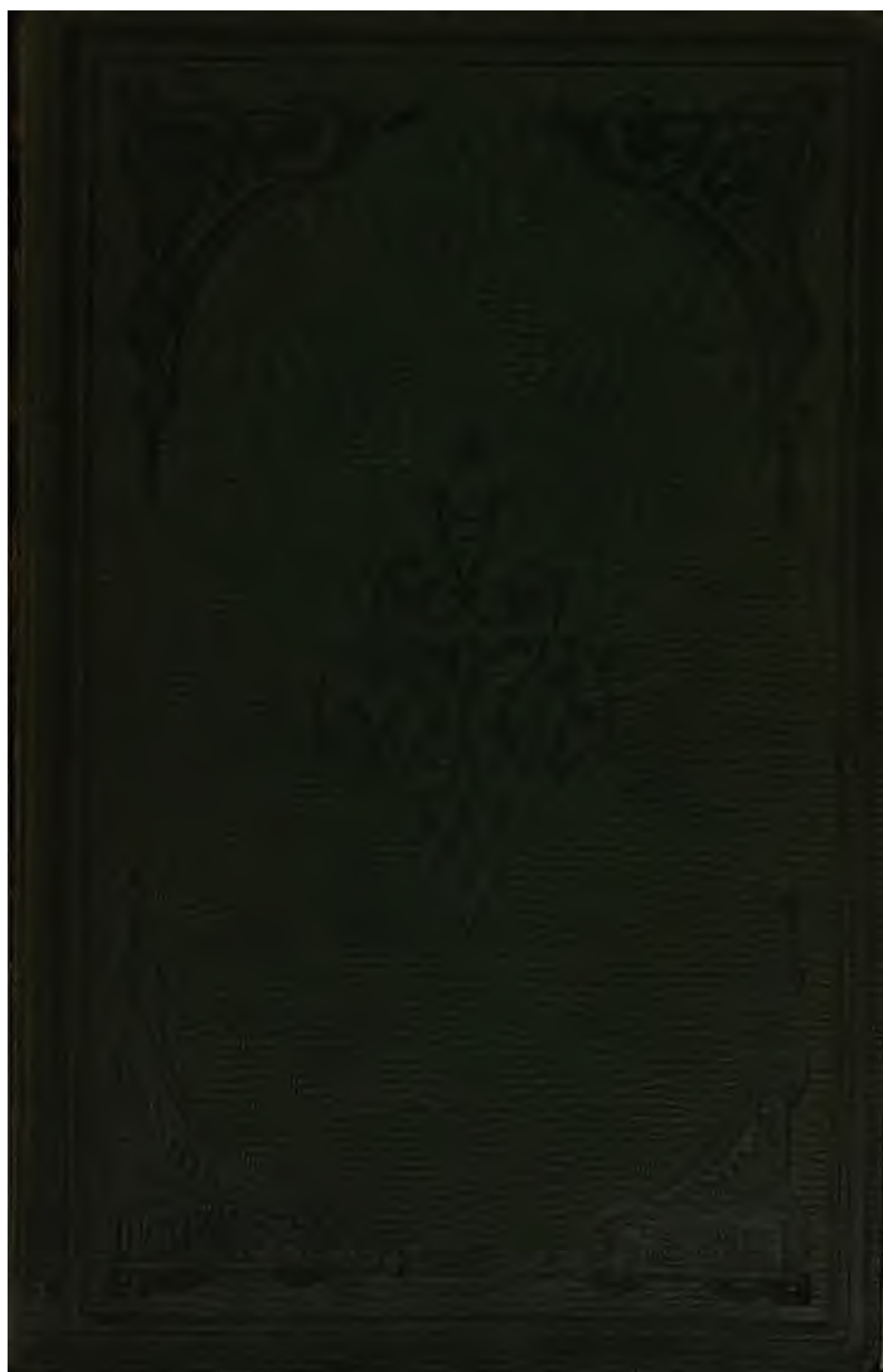
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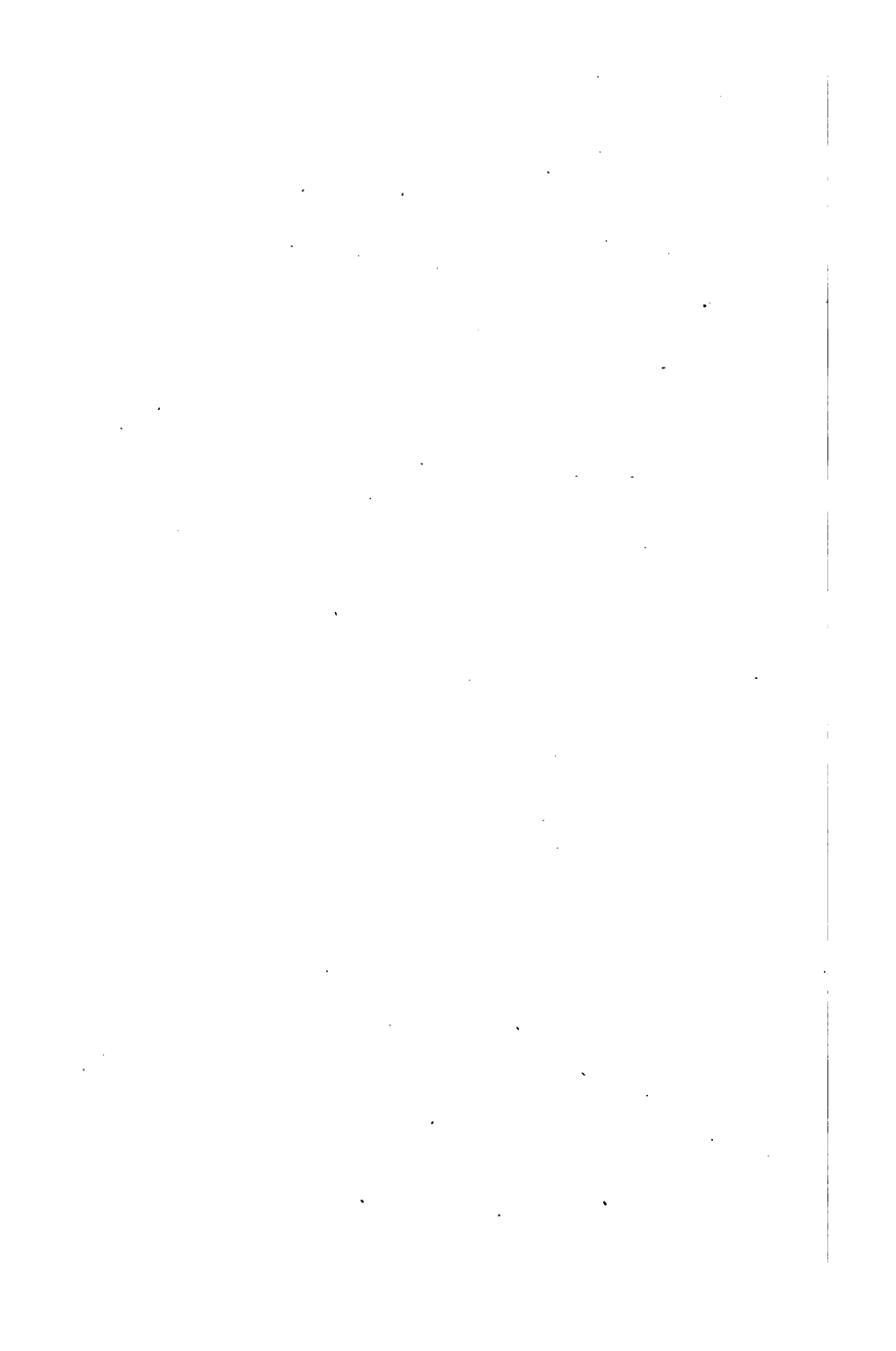
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CHALMERIANA;  
OR,  
COLLOQUIES WITH DR. CHALMERS,

AUTHOR OF

"EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY," AND "ASTRONOMICAL SERMONS."

BY

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following interesting Colloquies with the celebrated DR. CHALMERS were written by MR. JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY. The name of DR. CHALMERS, and their intrinsic value, render further introduction unnecessary.

*November, 1853.*





# CHALMERIANA,

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## PART I.

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Edinburgh, 9th Month 13th, 1830.

MY wife and I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Thomas Chalmers (author of "Evidences of Christianity," "Civic Economy of Large Towns," "Astronomical and Commercial Sermons," &c.; and now Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh,) at Samuel Hoare's, soon after the last yearly meeting; and I now purpose to record some few particulars of our communications with him there, and in this city, not excluding some other dramatic personæ, in whom we have been interested; chiefly persons with whom we have enjoyed some profitable, mental, and intellectual intercourse.

since my confinement here with an inflamed leg, at the house of our truly benevolent friends, Alexander and Anne Cruickshank.

On the first day of our meeting at S. Hoare's, we walked together for an hour before dinner in the garden, and soon found that we were led by a feeling of congeniality into familiar intercourse. He had just been presented by a friend with a copy of my Essays, which he was reading with attention, and was kind enough to approve. This circumstance led to much interesting conversation on the evidences of Christianity, on which we had both written, their cumulative and harmonious character, and the enlargements which had been made in this branch of theological knowledge of late years. It was a noble encouragement to a good cause to find that these evidences were better understood and more fully appreciated 1800 years after the introduction of our religion, than at any period of Church History, since the days when men were brought into actual contact with miracles. We talked over the subject of a moral law, universally written by the Moral Governor of the universe on the hearts of mankind. He allowed the existence

of this principle, and its universality, although we were both aware that the light, though pure, is often faint. The darkness of fallen human nature comprehendeth it not. I remarked the distinction which exists between this law and the natural faculty of conscience—the law being the light, the conscience the eye; the law the evidence, the conscience the presiding judge. He admitted this distinction; but when, after the example of Butler, I misnamed this law the *moral sense*, he corrected me, and said, “No; the moral sense is identical with the conscience. The law which you speak of is that which the moral sense *perceives*. I argued, that the law thus written on the hearts of all men, although faint, and although perpetually misread by an obscure and perverted conscience, is in itself perfectly pure and holy—an efflux of the divine character. When, therefore, I reflected on the utter corruption of human nature, and the apostolic doctrine—“In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing,” I could not but conclude, that this universal law is a work of the Spirit.

*Chalmers.*—I have no objection to admit that it is a work of the Spirit.

This was, as I thought, a noble conclusion, worthy of the singular breadth and liberality of Dr. Chalmers' mind, and of the simplicity he displays in admitting truth, from whatever quarter it may come. It reminded me of the broad assertion twice made to me in private conversation, by William Wilberforce, that, according to his full belief, an *effective offer of salvation was made to every man born into the world.*

I am inclined to think, that some of the greatest luminaries in the evangelical world in the present day, are essentially anti-predestinarian. Or, if they hold the doctrine, they hold it in great moderation, as forming part of the *balanced adjustment* of Scripture, and not as subversive of the freedom of all mankind to stand or to fall. I will just add, that since Christ is expressly declared to have died for all men, and since the law of God—a principle, when obeyed, in its nature *saving*—is, as we believe, universally communicated to men, it is only reasonable to believe that our fallen race has obtained this blessing through the redemption which is by Christ Jesus our Lord.

At dinner we had an interesting party,—Dr.

Bird Sumner, Bishop of Chester; Dr. Lushington, the Civilian; Buxton, and a family party, including our sister, Elizabeth Fry. The conversation during dinner turned to the subject of Capital Punishments. Lushington, in the warmest terms, expressed his abhorrence of the system, and declared his opinion that the poor criminal was thus hurried out of life and into eternity, by means of the perpetration of another crime, far greater, for the most part, than any which the sufferer had himself committed. He even indicated a *feeling*, that the worse the criminal, the more improper such a punishment. Buxton rallied him, and restated his arguments with great pleasantry,—“The doctor assures us, that if your lordship was condemned to the gallows, or that you, Dr. Chalmers, were about to suffer the ultimum supplicium, he would be the last man to prevent the execution of the law, or prevent the translation of the virtuous to a happier state. But to terminate the probationary existence of the most degraded of our race, of the worst of robbers or the most outrageous of murderers, was opposed at once to all the feelings of humanity, and to all the principles of religion.”

After all, however, there is a great deal of truth in Dr. Lushington's statement, and substantially we were all agreed.

After dinner a brisk discussion arose respecting the comparative religious condition of the Long Parliament, and of our representatives of the present day, of latitudinarianism and laxity. Lushington contended that the advantage lay on the side of our modern senate, and that the looseness of the present was a less crying evil than the hypocrisy of past times. The Bishop and Chalmers took the other side, and not only demonstrated the religious superiority of the Puritans, but strongly insisted on the great principle, that it is godliness which exalteth a nation, and which can alone impart true strength and stability to human governments. Chalmers stated the points of the argument with great strength and clearness; and the Bishop confirmed what he said. In the evening, Joanna Baillie joined our party; and after the Bishop and others were gone, we formed a social circle, of which Chalmers was the centre. The Evidences of Christianity became again the topic of conversation. I rather think the harmony of Scripture, and the accordance and

correspondence of one part with another were adverted to. This evidence of *accordance* is one to which Dr. Chalmers' mind is obviously much alive. He knows how to trace in the adaptation between one branch of truth and another, and especially between God's religion and man's experience, the master-hand of perfect wisdom and goodness.

*Chalmers.*—"The historical evidences of Christianity are abundantly sufficient to satisfy the scrutinizing researches of the learned, and are within the reach of all well educated persons. But the internal evidence of the truth lies within the grasp of *every* sincere inquirer. Every man who reads his Bible, and compares what it says of mankind with the records of his own experience; every man who marks the adaptation of its mighty system of doctrine to his own spiritual need, as a sinner in the sight of God, is furnished with practical proof of the divine origin of our religion. I love this evidence. It is what I call the *portable* evidence of Christianity."

On the following morning he read the Scriptures to the family circle, and selected the latter half of John xiv. The verse which peculiarly



attracted his attention was v. 21,—“ He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” The observations which he made on this verse, and on the whole bearing of what he had read, were excellent, and completely accordant with the views which Friends have so long been accustomed to take of the true method of obtaining religious knowledge. While we are bound to make a diligent use of the Scriptures—that appointed depository of all religious information—we are ever to remember that obedience to the law of Christ is the means of bringing us into a capacity of rightly understanding and appreciating their contents, as our Lord himself has declared that those who do his Father’s will shall know of his doctrine, and of its divine authority. Every act of childlike obedience to the dictates of the Spirit of God, prepares the way for an increase of light ; and where Christ manifests *himself*, there will be a true and saving apprehension of religion. In setting forth these views, Dr. Chalmers was, I believe, speaking from his own experience, for it seems to have been by

the gradual following up of his convictions of duty, and through the operation of a remarkable *moral* energy, that, under the grace of God, he found his way out of the dark regions of barren speculation, into the green pastures of the fold of Christ. It ought, however, to be remarked, that this very energy led him to a careful and deep investigation of the subject. When comparatively ignorant and worldly, he was called upon by his learned friend Dr. Brewster, to write the article on Christianity for the Edinburgh Encyclopædia. He obeyed the summons, though himself scarcely a believer; and his researches in order to this end, especially the study of Scripture itself, were the means first of convincing his understanding of the truth of religion, and next of impressing his heart with a sense of its unspeakable importance and excellence. In the whole of this process, he was doubtless marvellously assisted by that childlike *simplicity* of mind, which he recommended to us so beautifully, and which is so marked a feature in his own character. "The meek will he guide in judgment—the meek will he teach his way!"

Before he concluded his familiar yet impressive

discourse, he powerfully contrasted two methods of religious education. The former, no stranger in Scotland—that of imparting to the minds of children a complete system of doctrinal orthodoxy, and without *moral* culture, leaving that system to produce its own fruits as it might. The latter, that of training children in such a course of virtuous obedience to the divine law, as would prepare them for the reception of greater and greater light respecting the doctrines of religion. He pointed out the vast superiority of the latter system. He would neglect neither moral nor religious culture, but he would make the former the pathway to the latter.

After breakfast, he gave us a lively description of the method he pursued of emancipating from pauperism a parish in Glasgow, containing 10,000 inhabitants, of which he was for many years the minister. With the consent of the parishioners, after repeated appeals to their good sense and reason, he dissolved the whole system of legal rates and reliefs in the parish; and having established a voluntary agency of superintendence, threw back the population to the operation of those natural principles, which lead men to pro-

vide for their own wants and for those of others. This experiment went on gradually, and was in the end crowned with complete success.

*Chalmers.*—"There were four distinct principles brought into action, which gradually swallowed up all the pauperism of the parish. The first was the principle of providence: for the labouring classes, being no longer permitted to depend on legal relief, soon began to exercise greater prudence, and more effective exertion, in order to provide for *themselves*. This principle consumed, at least, a fourth part of the pauperism of the parish. The next principle set at work was that of mutual charity and reciprocal beneficence between near relations. This is a strong natural principle, and it abolished another fourth part. A third proportion was removed by the operation of the same kind of mutual good offices, which naturally prevail among the poor in general, independently of relationship. The operation of these several causes presently left me only one remaining fourth of the pauperism of my parish to be disposed of, and this was nullified by the voluntary liberality of the rich, now released from all compulsory tax for the

poor. Abundant funds were placed for this purpose in my hands. But beyond a very small extent I soon found them needless. Although I have for many years left the parish, the same system is pursued, and pauperism no longer afflicts this part of the population of Glasgow."

I forget whether in this instance the legal supplies were cut off at once, or by a gradual process.

In England Dr. Chalmers recommends the self-extinction of the poor-rates, simply by a cessation for taking on any new cases. Shortly before our interview, he had been examined before the Committee of the House of Commons, and was listened to with great attention and respect. His evidence forms sixty-three folio pages in print, containing, no doubt, a great mass of elaborate details, as well as a forcible statement of his principles. Dr. Chalmers was examined chiefly by Spring Rice, the chairman of the Committee, who agrees with the Doctor in deprecating the introduction of the poor rate system into Ireland. One is ready to fear that the state of that country, unprovided as it has always been with any legal system of relief, affords a practical

refutation of Chalmers' system, and the same may be said of the population of the kingdom of Naples, and more especially of Sicily, which I understand to be in a condition of the most abject and frightful poverty. I have suggested these objections to Dr. Chalmers since I have been in Edinburgh. He plainly says they are not, in his opinion, of any weight.

*Chalmers.*—"The wretched poverty of the Irish appears to me to be owing to their national character, their want of education, and the influence of their religion. The same observation applies with equal force to the Neapolitans, Sicilians, and other Popish nations. In Ulster, where there is less popery and more education, [he might have added, and a mixture of Scots,] there is no great measure of poverty. I am persuaded that the introduction of poor rates into Ireland would make matters much worse."

On the whole I am inclined to the same opinion, but I fear even the gradual extinction of this incubus in England might, for some time to come, be productive of a great quantity of individual suffering. But is it not always a hard

matter to recover our ground, when we have once fallen into dangerous practical errors?

When our conversation was concluded, my brother, Samuel Hoare, took me with him on the box of his chariot, and drove Dr. Chalmers and his highly pleasing wife to Wilberforce's, at Highwood Hall, beyond Hendon. Dr. Chalmers and his lady were engaged to stay some days there, and *we* were glad of the opportunity of enjoying the company of the Senator Emeritus, together with that of Dr. Chalmers, for a few hours. Our morning passed delightfully; Chalmers indeed was comparatively silent, as he often is when many persons are collected, and the stream of conversation flowed between ourselves and the ever lively Wilberforce. I have seldom observed a more amusing and pleasing contrast between two great men, than between Wilberforce and Chalmers. Chalmers is stout and erect, with a broad countenance,—Wilberforce minute, and singularly twisted. Chalmers, both in body and mind, moves with a deliberate step. Wilberforce, infirm as he is in his advanced years, flies about with astonishing activity, and while with nimble finger he seizes on everything that adorns

or diversifies his path, his mind flits from object to object with unceasing versatility. I often think that particular men bear about with them an analogy to particular animals. Chalmers is like a good-tempered lion; Wilberforce is like a bee. Chalmers can say a pleasant thing now and then, and laugh when he has said it, and he has a strong touch of humour in his countenance, but in general he is *grave*, his thoughts grow to a great size before they are uttered.

Wilberforce sparkles with life and wit, and the characteristic of his mind is "rapid productiveness." A man might be in Chalmers' company for an hour, especially in a party, without knowing who or what he was—though in the end he would be sure to be detected by some unexpected display of powerful originality. Wilberforce, except when fairly asleep, is never latent. Chalmers knows how to veil himself in a decent cloud. Wilberforce is always in sunshine. Seldom, I believe, has any mind been more strung to a perpetual tune of love and praise. Yet these persons, distinguished as they are from the world at large, and from each other, present some admirable points of resemblance. Both of them are broad



thinkers and liberal feelers. Both of them are arrayed in humility, meekness, and charity. Both appear to hold self in little reputation. Above all, both love the Lord Jesus Christ, and reverently acknowledge Him to be their only Saviour.

I shall take this opportunity of giving a leaf out of Wilberforce's history, which has served to amuse one of our little circles at Edinburgh. I derived my information from a delightful tête-à-tête conversation with the hero of my tale when we were once strolling together over Earlham.

Wilberforce was the son of a wealthy merchant at Hull, and was scarcely more than *of age* when he was elected member of Parliament for that town. But he was not long to occupy this station, for a higher one awaited him. Immediately after the Hull election he attended the county election at York, where to the vast assembly collected in the Castle-yard, he made a speech on a popular question of the day, Fox's India Bill. His eloquence, especially in the earlier stages of his course, was, as I understand, of a most animated and diversified character, and his voice sonorous and mellifluous. The speech produced an almost magical effect on the assembled multi-

tude, and under a strong and apparently unanimous impulse they cried out, "We will have the little man for *our* member!" In short, though without pretensions from family or fortune to the honour of representing that vast county, he was elected its member by acclamation.

Wilberforce was now one of the most popular of men. His fine talents, his amiability, his wit, his gaiety, his *songs* adapted him for the highest worldly circles in the county; and of the assembled gentility at Doncaster races he was said to be the life and ornament. Yet through all these glittering scenes he preserved the character of *morality*. Happily, however, that Heavenly Father whom his pious parents had taught him to love in early life, was preparing for him "better things" than the blandishments of the world, and "things which accompany salvation."

Not long after his election he was travelling through France, in order to visit a sick relation at Nice, in company with his friend Isaac Milner, afterwards Dean of Carlisle, a person somewhat older and more serious than himself. In the course of their journey they happened to converse about a clergyman in Yorkshire, who, having

been impressed with evangelical views, was remarkably devoted to his parochial duties.

*Wilberforce.*—"That man carries things a great deal too far in my opinion."

*Milner.*—"Do you think so? I conceive that if you tried him by the standard presented to us in the New Testament, you would change that opinion."

*Wilberforce.*—"Indeed, Milner. Well, I have no objection to try the experiment. I will read the New Testament with you, if you like, with pleasure."

Important indeed were the results of this casual and unexpected conversation. The two friends read the whole of the New Testament together as they journeyed towards Nice, and this single perusal of the records of inspiration was so blessed to Wilberforce that he became a *new man*. His opinions and his feelings underwent a rapid revolution. He found himself to be a sinner, and rejoiced in the discovery of his Saviour. He renounced the world, and devoted himself to the fear and service of Almighty God.

When he arrived at Nice, he found in the chamber of his sick relative a copy of Dr. Dod-

dridge's "Rise and Progress." This useful manual of religious experience he read with extreme eagerness, and it appears to have been the means of confirming and completing his change. The news now swiftly flew into Yorkshire that their popular young member was *gone mad*. Wilberforce followed the report *in propria persona*, threw himself with noble boldness amongst his friends and supporters—plainly told them of his change of sentiment, and with good reason adopted (as it may be presumed) the words of a yet more eminent convert, "I am *not* mad, most noble Festus, I speak the words of *truth* and *sobriety*." From that time his influence in the county was constantly extending itself, and when many years afterwards a contested election took place between Colonel Lascelles and Lord Milton, he polled a considerably larger number of the votes than either of the other candidates; and a voluntary subscription flowed in of about 40,000*l.* to defray the expenses. A great part of this subscription was returned. Wilberforce afterwards retired from the representation of the county, being unable, from want of health, to cope with the weight of business, which it threw on his

shoulders. It is impossible to reflect on this story without much pleasure. What a mercy to Wilberforce was the petty and apparently fortuitous circumstance which led him to an attentive perusal of the New Testament! And how divine the book which, through the blessing of its Almighty Author, could bear with so irresistible a moral and spiritual force on the intellect, the genius, and the dispositions of Wilberforce! In like manner what a mercy to Dr. Chalmers was the unexpected and at that time unlikely application made to him by Dr. Brewster!

It was in the order of Providence that two *chance* circumstances, as the world would call them, should be the means of translating two mighty minds from the region of spiritual darkness into the kingdom of light; converting the sceptical philosopher into the profound theologian, and the witty songster into the abolisher of the slave trade—the faithful and ardent Christian labourer in the cause of justice and humanity.

The author of that extraordinary book, “The Natural History of Enthusiasm,” proposes a beautiful analysis of the order and harmony of Providence. He says that events may be divided

into two classes—those which arise in the ordinary course of experience, and which being regulated by certain known laws, natural or moral, may to a certain and often a great extent be calculated beforehand, and thus bring into exercise the quality of prudence or the useful faculty of long-sightedness. Indeed a careful observation and right estimate of such causes and effects may be said to constitute the best kind of worldly *wisdom*. Another and more limited class of events may be described as incidental or fortuitous. These intersect the common course, the straight onward line of our experience from a multitude of different points. They bear laterally upon us, and arise out of an endless and ever varied train of causes, connected very probably with the life and conduct of others, *originating*, it may be, in some idle word, or some thoughtless action of some unknown person whose mortal existence has been closed for centuries. And yet these apparently stray circumstances often intersect our path just at such a time and in such a manner as enable them to serve the most important purposes for our temporal and spiritual good.

How perfect must be the skill and wisdom of that omniscient Being who wields this infinitely intricate machinery, often inclines its forces in answer to *prayer*, and never fails to apply them to the highest advantage of his believing and obedient children !

- One of the first conversations which I enjoyed with Dr. Chalmers in this place had relation to this subject. Immediately on receiving a note from me to tell him of our being here, he came to us in the kindest manner, and has since been an almost daily and ever acceptable and cheering visitor. I have found his visits like two things of which I have lately experienced the vast importance—*a tonic for the faint* and *a crutch for the lame* !

I was telling him one day how much I admired the “Natural History of Enthusiasm ;” though not always in full agreement of sentiment with its unknown author. He quite agreed with me as to the excellence of the work.

*Chalmers.*—“I was glad to see the book in my library, worn and tattered with use. What do you think of the chapter on Providence—of the

manner in which he proposes to reconcile its universal order with its special provisions? What do you think of his intersecting lines?"

"It is a good hypothesis admirably stated."

*Chalmers.*—"I have been led to form a somewhat different hypothesis. I should say that every circumstance which happens to us of a nature which leads us to ascribe it to the special Providence of God, or to regard it as an answer to prayer, may be traced to its natural cause, and that cause to an anterior train of circumstances to a certain extent, but that our powers of investigation are soon foiled, and that behind the *curtain of observation*, there lies a vast and hidden space, which affords abundant room for the exertion of the peculiar Providence of Him who answers the prayers of his believing children."

Another morning at my request he repeated this statement, and illustrated his hypothesis as follows:—

"A missionary whose movements are of importance to the diffusion of the gospel—a child of God prepared to bear his message of love to the heathen world—is safely wafted across the



ocean. Such a circumstance may fairly be regarded as purely Providential, and as an instance of that tender protection and care, which God condescends to bestow, in an especial manner, upon his own servants. The vessel might be propelled by an immediate act of divine power, or by the wind. If by the wind, its motion was not miraculous. The wind might be produced by the simple fiat of the Creator, or by the condensation of vapour. If by the latter, there was again no miracle. The condensation of vapour might also be specially ordained, or it might arise from absence of heat on the surface of the ocean. If the latter, again no miracle. But we are soon lost in the depths of meteorology, and behind the wind, and the condensation of vapour, and the absence of heat on the waters, and beyond the utmost limit of our observation, there lies a hidden train of causes on which the special and immediate Providence of God may act in a manner of which we can have no conception. Thus may we reconcile the peculiar exertions of divine love in answer to the prayers of his children with all the regularities of an harmonious system."

I remarked, that since the first cause of the final result must in such a case be long anterior to it in point of date, his hypothesis was grounded on the supposition that the prayer was foreknown and the answer to it preordained. When however we call to mind the incomprehensible nature of God, with whom it may perhaps be truly said that *there is no tense*, we may confess that this forms no objection to his view of the subject. Can we on the whole do better than put our mouths in the dust and exclaim with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out—for of Him and through Him and to Him are *all things*?"

We agreed that behind the veil of the apparently unchanging order and sequences of nature, there is hidden the ever-present and ever-acting hand of God, which moulds and fashions all things according to his will, and provides abundantly for the needs of his dependent and obedient children.

*Chalmers.*—"We ought always to distinguish between such an explanation of any difficulty in the theory of religion as is found from Scripture to

be the true one, and an hypothesis of our own by which the difficulty may be reconciled. Yet hypotheses of this kind serve a purpose of great importance; they parry the objections of the infidel. My hypothesis, I might say to the unbeliever, is one among many by which the knot may be untied. Possibly it may be the true one: but whether it be so or not, it is sufficient to show that your vaunted difficulty is not insurmountable, and that reason cannot sanction your pressing it upon us as an objection to our religion."

I observed that the great object of Bishop Butler's "Analogy" was to parry objections; and we agreed that in this respect that noble work had served a most important purpose in promoting the cause of truth. Chalmers expressed his admiration of Butler's unsophisticated mind and absence of affectation; but Butler possessed a mind of singular depth and originality, and such minds are beyond the limits of affectation.

*Chalmers.*—"I strongly recommend your reading Leibnitz's 'Essais sur la Théodicée.' He combines the mind of a philosopher, and a profound knowledge of metaphysics, with an unqualified regard for Christianity and its whole system

of essential doctrine. I was telling Mrs. Gurney, at the Museum, of the *hypothesis* by which he accounts for the origin and existence of evil. Take any complete part of creation—an animal for example. How perfect is the machine; how beautiful its proportions; how absolute the harmony of its constituent parts; how admirably it works! But look at some fragment of the creature,—a piece of a nail, a broken bit of bone, or a claw. How unsightly it is; how unmeaning; how little worthy, as far as appears, of the master hand of infinite skill and wisdom! Now, all the evil which we perceive around us, afflicting as it is to our feelings, and trying to our faith, may be nothing more than a small unsightly fragment; and, in its connexion with the moral universe of God, it may form a part of a perfectly harmonious and glorious whole.”

I mentioned Dr. Southwood Smith’s “Illustrations of the Divine Government.” This author, whose work is popular among the Unitarians, solves all the attributes of God into pure *benevolence*—denominates sin “moral evil”—ascribes it to the direct appointment of God, and presumes to infer that it not only promotes

the general good, but, taken in connexion with its corrective consequences, in the end enhances the happiness of the sinner. Hence it follows that if a man murders his parents, or flays his children alive, he will be the better for it in *the long run*. A friend of mine, for whom I have a personal regard, once told me that I should find *his* faith written in this extraordinary book. If so, it is not too much to say that his faith is both weak and wicked.

*Chalmers*.—"It is a dangerous error to reduce the divine attributes to the single quality of goodness. Our best metaphysicians (especially Brown) teach us that the *ethical virtues* are in their nature unalterably independent. Justice is an ethical virtue, distinct in its origin, character, and end, and must not be confounded with any other. Those principles apply to the moral attributes of God."

"Yes," I said; "they are blended, but not confused."

*Chalmers*.—"There is union in them, but not unity. The harmony, yet distinctness, of the divine moral attributes is most instructively inscribed on the atonement of Christ."

"Surely," I replied, "*that* is a point where justice and benevolence meet; where God has displayed at once his abhorrence of sin and his mercy to the sinner."

*Chalmers*.—"Brown had very low and inadequate views of the character of God. The same may be said of Paley. Witness his founding his system of morals on expediency."

This was indeed a degradation in a Christian moral philosopher; and the more so as even a Cicero could declaim against "*utilitas*" as the basis of morals. I mentioned an anecdote which I have heard of Paley in his last illness, which is said to have had the authority of William Hey, the late noted surgeon at Leeds; and which, if true, is remarkably consoling.

When not far from his end, Paley, in conversing with some of his family or friends, took a calm review of his several works. He expressed the deep regret and dissatisfaction which at that awful time he felt in the recollection of his "Moral Philosophy." He was happy to believe that his "Natural Theology" and "Evidences of Christianity" were sound and useful works; but the book on which his mind then

dwelt with the greatest pleasure was his "*Horæ Paulinæ*."

*Chalmers*.—"I am not surprised at this. It is an admirable statement of evidence, and displays a more masterly hand than any of his other works."

Our Lord has declared that except we are "converted and become as little children" we shall "in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." I have heard that this lucid and powerful writer became a little child in the best sense of the terms before he died. I have also heard it stated, on what appeared to be good authority, that had his posthumous sermons been chronologically arranged, they would have displayed a gradually progressive change from a sort of semi-Pelagianism to a sound and evangelical view of Christianity. It is delightful to be able to ascribe such a man as Paley to the company of true believers in a crucified Redeemer.

One morning, while Dr. Chalmers was with us, and was speaking with great liberality of certain Christians who differed from him in sentiment, Dr. R—— H—— joined our party; an amiable and pious man about my own age, once

well known and loved by some members of our family. Unhappily he has now fallen into a religious system the very opposite to Chalmers'—a system of the most rigid exclusiveness. So strangely is his spiritual vision perverted, that while he condemns all denominations of Christians as fatally erring, he appears to presume that the true universal Church of Christ consists of himself and a few other individuals who, while they reject the Sabbath, occasionally meet together in this place for devotional purposes. After Chalmers was gone, he began to unfold his views to me, which appeared to be simply these—that the Church of Christ is *one*, and that since he and his friends were the only persons who exactly conformed themselves to the model of the New Testament, they, and they only, were that *one* church. I can hardly describe the odd feeling it gave me, just after I had been expatiating in the broad fields of Dr. Chalmers' heart and intellect, to be thus suddenly thrust into the narrowest of imaginable corners. The contrast was instructive, and enhanced my value for that mighty stream of divine love and charity, which overleaps all the barriers of pride and



prejudice. May I ever be preserved from becoming a latitudinarian in religion. But while I am deeply convinced that on no other foundation can any man stand with safety but Jesus Christ, I never more clearly saw than I do at present, that this foundation has a breadth proportioned to its stability. Christianity is a "law of liberty." It may be said to team with the riches of a divine liberality. God "giveth to all men LIBERALLY, and upbraideth not." I am disposed to think that the breadth of every system of religion which has Christ for its basis, is one of the best tests by which we may try its genuineness and its truth.

I afterwards told Chalmers what had passed between Dr. R—— H—— and myself. He put on a countenance of great good humour. "It reminds me," said he, "of an elderly gentleman, of whom I once knew something, who was fully persuaded that true Christianity was exclusively to be found in himself and his old wife. When the lady died, the Universal Church was restricted to his own person."

One of the most liberal Christians that I have ever met with is Dr. Henry Bathurst, Bishop of

Norwich, with whom I have enjoyed rather an intimate and certainly an affectionate friendship for more than twenty years. I am glad to have had the opportunity, since my lot has been cast in Edinburgh, to correct some unfounded notions respecting his opinions and religious character. It is not lightly that I apply to him the title of Christian, because I look upon him as a man thoroughly convinced both of the divine origin of Christianity, and of the truth of its essential doctrines; and as one who acts up to his own views of duty with a great degree of simplicity and integrity. I am prepared to allow that in some of his minor habits there is more of a conformity to the common practices of the world than I can myself approve; that he is more interested in politics than exactly becomes a minister of the Gospel and a bishop; and lastly, that his amiability and liberality at times so far exceed, as insensibly to overflow the exact line which a more scrutinizing principle might have led him to draw. Nevertheless I apprehend that many who find eager fault with him for subscribing to the building of some Popish chapel, or for giving too gracious a reception to some

Socinian address, are immeasurably behind him in the breadth and beauty of the Christian character. The reports which I have sometimes heard of his not believing in the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, are, to my knowledge, unfounded; for we have often conversed on the subject, and he has assured me that he should consider it utterly unprincipled in any man who entertained Unitarian views to continue to wear a mitre in the Church of England. He was kind enough carefully to peruse my "Essays on Christianity," which include a long and detailed defence of the Deity of our Lord, previously to their publication; and I received the assurance of his entire accordance of sentiment with me both on this and all the other essential points in religion to which the work relates. He again read the book after its publication, and from no one of my friends had I the pleasure of receiving more cordial expressions respecting it of accordance and encouragement.

The Bishop of Norwich is the survivor of thirty-six children, by one father and two mothers. When a young man, he acted in the capacity of private secretary to the first Earl Bathurst, the

celebrated friend of Alexander Pope. At his house he was accustomed to meet the most eminent characters among the Tories of that period—for example, David Hume—and his store of anecdotes respecting them is rich and varied. His memory is peculiarly retentive; so much so, that when a boy at Winchester School, he could repeat *memoriter* the whole of Homer's Iliad in the original Greek. Even now in his old age, his occasional and often large quotations from Sophocles, Homer, Tacitus, Cicero, &c., and even from such authors as Erasmus and Grotius, not to mention the best English poets, are truly surprising. One day I was astonished at his suddenly repeating to me a long passage out of Calvin's Institutes! His mind is indeed richly stored with ancient and modern literature, and an hour of *tête-à-tête* conversation with him has often been to me an hour of intellectual luxury. His great qualities are integrity and charity. His views on the subject of Roman Catholic emancipation are well known, and from an intimate knowledge of his mind on the subject, I am able to assert that they were founded not on any party feeling, but on comprehensive views of justice and Christian

liberality. He may possibly underrate the evils of Popery, yet no man, in spirit and conduct, is less a papist than himself. He has the very pith of Protestantism in him, because he would have the Bible distributed amongst all men, and all men form their own judgment of its contents. He would lay no bonds on the conscience, and impose no restrictions on the inquiries after truth of any man living. The honest boldness with which, for so many successive years, he broke the line of the episcopal phalanx in declaring his sentiments on this great national question, must always entitle him to unfeigned respect; and truly he lived to be rewarded. It is very remarkable that after so long a term of unsuccessful warfare he should live to see many of his mitred brethren rallying round the standard which he had so long upheld, and assisting to complete the triumph of those views to which he had nobly sacrificed all his own hopes of further advancement. There is no doubt that on the score of his talents, his character, and his connexions, he might, by renouncing those views, have commanded the highest ecclesiastical prizes. But he happily preferred a moderate income and a clear conscience.

His integrity of mind has also been manifested by the cordial and uncompromising manner in which he has always supported the Bible Society. His mind is far too wide to permit him to harbour those nice and (as I think) sophistical distinctions by which some persons persuade themselves that they cannot in conscience join the universal Church in distributing the unmixed records of inspiration to the whole family of man.

The charity of the Bishop displays itself in a most remarkable absence of evil thoughts about any man (see 1st Cor. xiii.)—in the allowance which he makes for the opinions of others—in the triumph of his mind over all merely sectarian distinctions—in a most willing expenditure of money to alleviate human woe, and in those daily acts of Christian courtesy and kindness which tenderly endear him to his family and friends, and constrain the love even of his opposers. His countenance presents a remarkable union of mildness and intelligence, and his manners are charming. He is on the whole the most complete gentleman with whom it has ever been my lot to associate.

The old age of the Bishop is distinguished by a

very rare measure of mental tranquillity, and the deplorable family afflictions which have happened to him of late years, have never appeared materially to break his calm. I have repeatedly found him sitting alone in his garden, engaged in quiet meditation. He is now in his eighty-fifth year, and his bodily powers are evidently withering, but his mental faculties continue in great brightness. I called upon him shortly before I left home, and adverting to his state of mental serenity, I said he reminded me of that exquisite description of a tranquil old age, which Cicero gives us in his work "De Senectute."

I ventured to add to the expression of my hope that his quietness of mind was not merely philosophical. His answer is worthy of concluding the present brief tribute of unfeigned affection and gratitude.

"No, Joseph, I am looking forward with peaceful expectation to my last change. My tranquillity is founded on the merits of Jesus Christ."

May the Almighty in unbounded mercy be pleased to grant that the sun of my honoured aged friend may set in peace and rise in glory!

Some of our colloquies in this place have

related to that very interesting subject, Geology, respecting which being myself an ignoramus, I am always glad to receive instruction. It is a science ardently pursued, though I hope within due limits, by our dear friend Martin Barry, a medical student here, who unites the three characters of a consistent friend, a man of science, and a gentleman; and whose daily association with us in this time of need, has been the means of tying us together in the pleasant bonds of brotherhood. He proposes to come to us regularly of an evening, and to give us Jamieson's Lectures on Geology—second-hand.

Our party one morning consisted of Martin, my wife and self, and the two brothers, Greville. The elder brother, a doctor of law, is well known in this city, for two things, different, but not inconsistent—philanthropy and botany. He is a man of decided talent and great amiability, in middle life, and has of late become, what is far better than all, a serious and decided Christian. I am heartily glad that he, with many others in these parts, is prepared to give up much of his time to the furtherance of those great objects, the amelioration of the criminal code, the abolition of



slavery, the distribution of the Scriptures, and last, but not least, the lessening of intoxication. But at present I have to do with him as a naturalist.

I am not going to turn lecturer myself, but I may be permitted just to advert to the manner in which the geologists are pleased (I presume on sufficient data) to dissect and classify the crust of the earth. They tell us that this mighty envelop of an inscrutable centre is composed first of the Primitive rocks, consisting generally of gneiss or granite, and next of four successive deposits, all bearing the appearance of an aqueous formation. These are the *transition*; the *secondary* (composed of alternate strata of sandstone and limestone); the *tertiary*, and lastly the *alluvial*. These layers of our native "crust" are not often found *all* together. Sometimes one is missing, sometimes another; but they are never known to change their order. Taking it for granted that they are of an aqueous origin, it is plain that they would form level strata were it not for some interrupting cause. And abundantly interrupted they are, and thrown into all varieties of inclination (the order of the series still being uniform) by

the protrusion of the rocks of igneous formation, which, impelled by the agency of some mighty combustion, appear to have shot upwards from the bowels of the earth, notwithstanding all the incumbent resistance of the aqueous strata. Some of these igneous formations divide only the Primitive; others advance no higher than the Transition or the Secondary rocks; while others triumph over all their aqueous opponents, and rear their heads in air. When the aqueous stratum, contiguous to the igneous intruder, is thrown upwards into an inclined plane, this circumstance affords an obvious indication that the aqueous formation is more ancient than the igneous. When, on the contrary, the aqueous stratum, touching the igneous rock, has assumed a horizontal level, we may in general conclude that it was deposited by the waters subsequently to the projection of its rival by the fires.

It appears that fossil remains in abundance, both of plants and animals, are found in the Secondary and Tertiary rocks; but from the Primitive formation these curious traces of obsolete life are wholly absent. The crystallized condition of this lowest layer of our crust, espe-

cially of the granite, has suggested to speculators the idea that it was created in a state of solution, and that it gradually assumed its present form during the silent course of innumerable centuries. They judge, no doubt, from the analogy of what they now see in the operations of nature.

But there is another analogical argument springing from an opposite quarter, which at least may serve to show that this conclusion is not a necessary one. According to the law of reproduction, by which the continuous order of nature is regulated, every creature undergoes many changes before it arrives at its perfection. It is by an established and very gradual process that a child becomes a man; a calf, a cow; a seedling, a tree; and a mineral, a crystal. But according to the law of original creation, as declared in Scripture, every creature must come forth from the hand of God in a condition of perfection. The man, the tree, and the quadruped were arrayed by the first fiat of Omnipotence in all the fulness of their beauty and all the completeness of their strength. May we not then suppose that the mineral formations partook of the general law? may we not conclude that the immense

masses of primitive granite were endued at once with the perfection of their hardness, their durability, and their lustre? God beheld the work of his hands, "and saw that it was *good*."

Both Chalmers and Greville approve and admire this argument, which is borrowed from the able work of Granville Penn. That author has endeavoured to reconcile the discoveries of geology with the usual method of interpreting the first chapter of Genesis; and is, accordingly, of opinion that the fossil remains found in the Secondary rocks, were deposited at the time of the Deluge, and belong to the history of that present order of things, which commenced with the six days' work recorded in Genesis. On this subject we have enjoyed some interesting conversations with Dr. Chalmers, as well as with Dr. Greville and our friend Martin Barry. We are all inclined to differ from Granville Penn, and to view it as by no means improbable that the geology of the Secondary rocks unfolds the operations of nature at a period anterior to the glorious work described by Moses in his history of the six days. I believe there is not one of us who would for a moment insinuate that the

contents of the first chapter of Genesis are not literally true. On the contrary, we acknowledge their truth, *con amore*; and for one, I am ready to confess that there is no part of the Bible more plainly stamped with the seal of divine inspiration.

*Chalmers.*—"It is bad policy in those who contend for the truth of revealed religion to extend their lines of defence to a greater length than necessity demands. By such conduct we may give countenance to the notion that we are weak, when, in point of fact, we dwell in an impregnable fortress. I am of opinion that in the first two verses of the Book of Genesis, there is ample room for all the discoveries, and even for the speculations of geology. 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.' Such was the state of things when 'the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,' and then began the first day's work. 'God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light *day*, and

the darkness he called *night*. And the evening and the morning were the first day.'

"There appears to me to be nothing in these verses which necessarily indicates that the original creation of 'the heaven and earth' formed a part of the first day's work. The first day's work was the creation or the revelation of light. If we ascribe to that day this single operation, it maintains its balance with the days which follow, on each of which there was a proportionate exertion of the divine power. On the second day the firmament was created. On the third, the dry land was separated from the sea, and clothed with the vegetable tribes. I conclude, therefore, that the original fiat of the Almighty, which called into being the heaven and the earth, was anterior to the first day, at what distance of time it were idle to conjecture."

Bishop Patrick gave a similar explanation of this passage long before geology had revealed her fossil dragons; and I remember hearing the same sentiments uttered by that sober Christian philosopher, Professor Farish.

*Chalmers*.—"There is a collateral argument which confirms my conclusion on this subject.

We have reason to believe, as Granville Penn has taught us, that in original creation all things came forth from the hand of God, in a condition of maturity and perfection. Now it appears to be at variance with this analogy to suppose that *when* God created the heaven and the earth, the earth was without form, and void, a dark, confused, chaotic mass! May we not rather infer, that our planet was created *perfect*, and that before she became 'without form, and void,' she had undergone some signal catastrophe, or possibly a series of revolutions? Here the geologist may apply his systems, and expatiate as he pleases. He shall inflict no injury on the Christian's faith."

I observed that the only difficulty which appeared to arise in the way of this conclusion, was the account given by Moses of the creation of the sun, moon, and stars, on the fourth day.

*Chalmers*.—"I also have felt this difficulty; but taking it for granted that the sun and moon were actually made on the fourth day, the earth in her original condition might have been provided with heat and light (if heat and light were required) through some different, yet equally adapted, instrumentality. With God all things are possible.

However, we may meet the difficulty in another way. Are you not aware that Rosenmüller interprets v. 14, which commences the history of the fourth day, not of the original formation of the sun and moon, but of their *application*—the ordination of their purpose in relation to this earth?"

A few days after this conversation, Dr. Chalmers brought me his notes on Granville Penn, and some extracts from Rosenmüller; it being his uniform practice to make notes on all books of importance which he happens to read. The received version of v. 14 begins, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night," &c. Rosenmüller clearly shows, from the comparison of other passages in the Hebrew Bible, that the original may rather be rendered, "Let the lights in the firmament of heaven be for (the purpose of) dividing the day from the night," &c. If this version is correct, it follows, that in the fourth day's command there is a reference made to the heavenly bodies, as already existing, and, therefore, when we afterwards read in v. 16, that "God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night," and "made the stars also," we



may not unfairly infer that this verse declares a previous act of the hand of Omnipotence. To my apprehension these views are confirmed by the words of the first verse, considered as descriptive of an original creation of the universe. I believe the Hebrew word, rendered "heaven," properly includes the sun and moon and all the starry host. There is one fact which tends to strengthen the idea, that the fossil remains discovered in the Secondary rocks, belong to the history of a creation anterior to the present order. It is this,—that amongst the two thousand species belonging to the animal kingdom (including shells), of which the remains have already been found in these rocks, there is not a single species which is now extant. The *Megatherium* of that ancient day, and even the lesser animals, have utterly disappeared in the present order of nature.

*Dr. Greville.*—"The same observation applies to the plants. We are daily discovering new fossil plants in the Secondary strata; and the number of those which we have ascertained is now very large. But we have not met with a single specimen known to the botany of the present day."

*Chalmers.*—"Whatever we may make of the

question of the age of our globe, geology furnishes us with a noble evidence of the creative power of God. When we inspect the machinery of nature, and argue with Paley from the contrivance to a contriver, the atheist sometimes tells us that the order of nature, for anything we know, may have been eternal. But geology has supplied us with ample proofs that the present order of nature has *not* been eternal; that at no immeasurable distance of time it had an actual beginning. The animals and plants with which the world once teemed are known no more. The earth is covered and adorned with an almost endless variety of new species. Can anything possibly account for this fact, short of the fiat of Omnipotence? If we conclude that the fossil remains in the Secondary rocks belong to a date anterior to the present order of nature, it appears that those which are found in the Tertiary deposit, in many of which are those of animals and plants still extant, may be well accounted for by the Deluge, and serve to establish the reality of that event. Thus, on the whole, the Scripture history and the science of geology are so far from being irremediably at variance, that they contain the elements of mutual harmony and accordance."

My lame leg being somewhat improved, we ventured one day to go and dine with Dr. Chalmers, who had kindly invited several interesting persons to meet us. Our party consisted of Dr. McGill, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow; George Ross, an advocate well known for philanthropic and religious character, as well as his talent; Tait, a minister of the Scotch Kirk; Paul and Barker; John Campbell, President of the Edinburgh Auxiliary Bible Society, and Craig and Ramsay, two superior men, Evangelical ministers of the Episcopal Church, and several ladies. Samuel Hoare, jun., who had just arrived at Edinburgh, was also with us, full of enjoyment. We felt ourselves very much at ease under the roof of our kind and hospitable friends, who had provided every accommodation for their decrepid visitor. The dinner was plentiful, but moderate. After it was over, we enjoyed some lively, and I hope profitable conversation, in which, however, our honoured host took but a small share. The subject of Missions was introduced; and all seemed to agree that to attempt the civilization of the heathen, *before* imparting to them the knowledge of Christianity, is to very little purpose, and

seems to argue a want of faith in the power of the gospel, and in its universal applicability to mankind. The unsuccessful efforts of the American Friends were alluded to, and I ventured to say, that these efforts had not only failed, to a great extent, as it relates to the heathen, but had been the means of promoting the extension among the Friends themselves, of a barren and heartless Deism. Now that a clear line of separation has taken place between the real Friends in America, and the new deistical sect, one may speak of these things without fear; especially since the absence of religious instruction, in the plan of Indian civilization, has always been disapproved, and the contrary warmly recommended by Friends in England.

Chalmers seemed pleased with the opportunity of diffusing a knowledge of the orthodoxy of our Society, and he called upon me to tell the story of Thomas Foster's appeal. I shall briefly repeat that story here, as I consider it well worthy of record, for the benefit of my children. I think it was in the year 1812, that Thomas Foster, a gentleman in our ranks, and a man of talent and education, was disowned by the Monthly Meeting of Rattcliffe for subscribing to the Unitarian Book

Society. He had long been supposed to entertain new views of the person of Christ ; and had he kept these views to himself, he would probably have been left by Friends to pursue his own course. But no sooner did he publicly assist in the diffusion of them, than he became, from this overt act, a proper object of the discipline of the Society, and accordingly lost his membership. The Monthly Meeting among Friends sometimes acts in the capacity of a legal court, from the decisions of which the appeal lies to the superior court of the Quarterly Meeting, and from those of the latter to our highest court, the general assembly of Friends at the Yearly Meeting. Thomas Foster appealed to the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex, which confirmed his disownment ; but still dissatisfied, he carried forward his appeal to the Yearly Meeting, at which I had the privilege of being present, and never shall I forget the interest of the occasion. All who loved the cause of truth felt that it was a critical one ; and all looked forward with anxious expectation to the result. Such cases come in the first instance before the Committee of Appeals, which is composed of one of the representatives of each Quar-

terly Meeting (the Quarterly Meeting appealed against alone excepted). I was appointed for Norfolk and Norwich, and acted as clerk to the Committee. After hearing a long speech from Thomas Foster, and the answer of the respondents from the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex, we were left to make our decision. I drew up a plain series of resolutions, which terminated with one confirming the disownment. The resolutions were read *seriatim* to the committee. Each in its turn met their unanimous approbation ; and never, I trust, shall I forget the feeling of unity of mind with which, during a most solemn pause, we all gave a silent assent to the concluding resolution. We were twenty-seven in number, collected out of every part of the kingdom, and previously but little acquainted with each other's sentiments ; but it was as if we were moulded together into one man. At length the silence was broken by our deeply experienced friend Jonathan Hutchinson, who expressed in a few pointed words his entire concurrence with the decision of the committee. " I do not know," he added, " what may have been the experience of my brethren, but for myself I can truly say, that without Christ I

should be of all men most miserable." Our unanimity being ascertained by the signatures of the whole committee, our report, confirming the disownment, was presented to the Yearly Meeting.

Against our decision, Thomas Foster, as in right entitled to do, made his final appeal to the body at large, consisting of about 1,200 men Friends, of various ages and conditions, without any written creed, and without any human president! Then indeed came on the trial of the Society's faith; the great question being immediately before us, whether orthodox Christianity or Unitarianism was the belief of Friends? Thomas Foster's speech was long and insinuating, calculated to amuse the young, and puzzle the old. The reply of the respondents was plain and luminous, and accompanied by abundant evidence, selected from the writings of the early Friends, and of the uniform adherence of the Society to the doctrines of the Divinity and Atonement of Christ. These extracts were compared with the notes of the Unitarian New Testament, and it soon appeared that the contrast between them was as palpable as between day and night. After the appellant had replied, both

parties withdrew, and our large assembly was left to form its decision on the vital and all-important question. A solemn silence overspread the whole meeting, and continued for a considerable time uninterrupted. At length William Grover arose; an elderly man, as remarkable for his clearness of mind, as he was striking from his pleasing and venerable appearance. In a single expressive sentence he pronounced his judgment against the appellant. After him, our elder Friends got up one after another; all with the same sentiment in their mouths; then Friends in the middle stages of life,—then the young—the more and the less serious—the plain, and those whom we somewhat technically call the *gay*. I never heard so many or so various Friends speak to any point, in our annual assembly, and blessed be the name of Him, whom alone we acknowledge to be our Saviour and our Head, all were of one accord. I am almost ready to question whether 1,200 men, gathered together without previous concert from so many different places, persons of such various ages, circumstances and characters, were before known to manifest on a theological subject so perfect an unanimity.



Were this history generally known, it might surely suffice to satisfy the public, that in the year 1812, Friends were not Unitarians. Since that period, the views of evangelical truth entertained in the Society, are so far from having deteriorated, that they have (to the best of my knowledge) been deepened, confirmed, and enlarged.

This story naturally led to some conversation on the subject of the Socinian controversy, and I was glad to hear Dr. McGull and others present, declare their opinion that Unitarianism is greatly on the decline in Scotland. It was our conclusion that this result is to be ascribed not merely to the diffusion of the Scriptures, but to the increased prevalence of correct views on the right method of interpreting them. This subject was illustrated by a reference to the critical course of the German theologians. Time was when the Socinian controversy was actively maintained in Germany, in much the same manner as it has been of late years in this country. But the German critics happened, with their usual ardour, to embrace the science of *Exegesis*, *i. e.* Interpretation, which they presently reduced to a code of salutary laws.

Finding that these laws forbade the Socinian methods of interpreting Scripture, they preferred their new hobby, *Exegesis*, to their old hobby, Unitarianism. And what has been the consequence? Driven from Unitarianism, and unwilling to become orthodox Christians, they lapsed into infidelity; and now, in commenting on the New Testament, as if it were an uninspired volume, (just as they would on the works of Sophocles or Demosthenes), they give it to a great extent, the ORTHODOX INTERPRETATION.

In the evening Dr. Chalmers read a few verses to us from Romans v., in the beginning of which chapter double mention is made of the Christian's hope.

*Chalmers.*—"The hopes of the Christian are founded on the *promises* of God. God has made us two great promises, and therefore the Christian enjoys two leading hopes. The first promise (with its corresponding hope) relates to the present life. It is the promise of *grace*. The second promise (with its corresponding hope) relates to the life to come. It is the promise of *glory*. Let us suppose that some person were to promise to bestow two benefits upon us, the one at the

end of a week and the other at the end of a year. If we had any reason to trust him, a double hope would be immediately raised in our minds. But if at the end of the week we found his first promise fulfilled, our remaining hope would rest on a confirmed basis, and we should then look forward to its accomplishment with a peaceful and unclouded expectation. So it is with the Christian. If he experience in himself the fulfilment of the first divine promise—the promise of grace—if his first hope be realized in the enjoyment of the Spirit, he will rest assured that his *second* hope will never make him ‘ashamed.’ Then will he REJOICE in the hope of the GLORY of God.”

After the doctor had finished his short discourse and prayer, I begged for a boon, which was easily granted :—*a few moments’ silence*, and I ventured shortly to address the interesting company on the infinite value of Christianity, on the happiness of that fellowship in the gospel, which knows no sectarian distinctions, and on the importance of unreserved dedication to a crucified and risen Lord. The party separated, apparently under the delightful influence of Christian love.

Dr. Chalmers' conversations with us have been much more frequently about *things* than *persons*; and indeed he has too much intelligence and power of mind to descend to a species of conversation, commonly called gossip, which is the frequent refuge of many whose understandings are meagrely stored with information. Persons, however, who from the combination of talent and oddity have made a noise in the world, must lay their account for being the subject of conversation in all sorts of companies. Such a man is Edward Irving, who once acted as an assistant preacher to Dr. Chalmers, in the Tron church at Glasgow.

*Chalmers.*—"When Irving was associated with me at Glasgow, he did not attract a large congregation, but he completely attached himself and to his ministry a limited number of persons, with whose minds his own was in affinity. I have often observed this effect produced by men whose habits of thinking and feeling are peculiar or eccentric. They possess a *magnetic* attraction for minds assimilated to their own."

"Nevertheless," I observed, "eccentricity, especially in people of serious religion, is extremely undesirable. I much prefer those broad;

intelligible qualities which attract the mass of mankind."

*Chalmers.*—"Yes, truly; after all, *gravitation* is much better than *magnetism*."

Chalmers himself is an admirable example of the attraction of gravitation. His clear reasoning, good sense, and honest simplicity, united with extraordinary warmth and vigour of mind, have rendered him steadily influential over a whole population.

With regard to Irving, it is a subject of deep regret to Dr. Chalmers and his other friends in Scotland, that his eccentricity has so far got the better of "the spirit of a sound mind" in him, that he has not only indulged himself in large flights in the region of unfulfilled prophecy, but has fallen into grievous error in relation to the moral nature of Christ; so much so as even to assert (as I understand) the corruption of the *human* nature, and therefore the *peccability* of the Holy One of Israel. Dr. Chalmers has so much confidence in the sincere piety of his friend, that he fully expects his return in due season to the genuine and sober religion of the New Testament. Nevertheless, such devious courses are very

hurtful. They give occasion of triumph to the enemies of religion, and, it may be, to religion's *chief enemy*; and we cannot doubt that they arise not merely from the obliquity, but more especially from the *pride* of the heart of man.

One morning my sofa was surrounded by a choice company of morning visitors;—David Erskine, a son of the late venerable Earl of Mar, who, with his sister, Lady Jane Erskine, was born blind. He has nevertheless cultivated his mind to an unusual extent, and I have no doubt that in intellectual pursuits his superior faculty of *attention* has abundantly made up for the absence of sight. Both he and his sister, with other members of their family, especially the laborious Lady Charlotte, are decidedly serious. Erskine was accompanied by our friend Edward Craig, the episcopal clergyman, who had been our frequent visitor, and is a person of piety, information, and *ready* talent. Dr. Chalmers was also of the party, with his wife and sister-in-law, and was unusually cheerful and humorous. I inquired of Craig in what manner he was accustomed to prepare his sermons.

*Craig*.—"I was once in the habit of writing my

sermons; but I found there was a temptation in it to *essay-making* instead of preaching the simple gospel. I detected myself in cultivating the understanding in lieu of impressing the hearts of my hearers. I now read and meditate; but write only a brief skeleton, from which I preach; and I find that I am more successful as a preacher than I used to be."

*Chalmers.*—"I am not in favour of any *category* in these matters. There is just a variety of gifts, and every preacher has his own experience. I cannot trust myself to extemporaneous preaching, lest I should throw out my mind too widely into some one branch of my subject, and then I must either tire out the patience of my hearers by maintaining the due proportions, or else destroy the unity of my discourse."

I observed that the force of ministry was greatly aided by *concentration*, and expressed my regret at the plan pursued by some of the clergy, when expounding the Scripture, of overwhelming its native force by an almost interminable commentary of their own.

*Chalmers.*—"I undertook to open Irving's new chapel in London. The congregation, in their

eagerness to obtain seats, had already been assembled about three hours. Irving said he would assist me by reading a chapter for me in the first instance. He chose the very longest chapter in the Bible, and went on with his exposition for an hour and a half. When my turn came, of what use could I be in an exhausted receiver? On another similar occasion he kindly proffered me the same aid, adding, 'I can be short.' I said, 'How long will it take you?' He answered, 'Only ONE HOUR AND FORTY MINUTES.' 'Then,' replied I, 'I must decline the favour.'"

*Craig.*—"My friend, Mr. P——, invited a party to supper; some of his guests had three miles to walk home after the meal. But before its commencement, Mr. P—— requested Irvine, who was one of the party, to read the Bible, and expound. He began and continued a discourse which manifested not even a tendency towards termination *until midnight*. The supper was of course either burnt up or grown cold. When the clock struck twelve, Mr. P—— tremblingly and gently suggested to him that it might be desirable to draw to a close. 'Who art thou,' he replied with a prophetic energy, 'who darest to interrupt



the man of God in the midst of his administrations?" He pursued his commentary for some time longer, then closed the book, and waving his long arm over the head of his host, uttered an audible and deliberate prayer that his offence might be forgiven."

I trust there was nothing uncharitable in the hearty smiles, to say the least of them, which this story occasioned. I believe we all appreciate the talents and Christian zeal of this extraordinary man, desiring only, that by depositing his singularities, both of opinion and habit, he may become a more effective instrument for the diffusion of pure Christianity. Ought we not also to derive from such things a lesson for ourselves, to make a record in our minds of the danger of popularity, and of the indispensable necessity (especially in those who minister the gospel) of abiding in that deep humility, that sense of the nothingness of self, that awful fear of God, and that dependence upon his Spirit, which are the surest preservatives from every error, and the best preparation for all our services?

I shall here record the intellectual deviations of another wandering star, which have for some time

past been the subject of daily conversation in the reunions of Edinburgh. I allude to Thomas Erskine, the pious and (as I am told) highly pleasing author of two well-known works, the first on the internal evidence of Christianity, the second on the unconditional freeness of the Gospel. In the latter work he has left the beaten track of orthodoxy, by labouring to prove that all mankind, whether converted or unregenerate, are already pardoned through the atonement of Christ. This universal pardon being *applied efficaciously* to those only who believe. It appears that in the mental composition of this amiable and excellent man, the imagination is a preponderating faculty, and he has lately joined himself to a small sect which has risen up in the neighbourhood of Port Glasgow, and whose sentiments are here known by the *name* of "the Row heresy." This name is from the parish so called, the incumbent of which, John Campbell, is considered to be a patron of the sect. It appears, however, that the true leader of it is a young lady, also a Campbell, who pretends, and probably sincerely believes, that she possesses the gift of tongues. When she conceives herself to be impelled to the work, she either

writes or speaks in a *would-be* language of which no one knows the characters or understands the sounds ; and she plainly confesses that she is herself as ignorant of both as the persons by whom she is surrounded. Several other individuals, chiefly amongst the young, now pretend to a similar gift, and the various sounds which they utter continue to be utterly without meaning either to themselves or others. A slight exception to this general rule has, however, been related to me on unquestionable authority. At one of their strange and turbulent meetings for worship, a young man named Macdonald, while engaged in vocal prayer, suddenly deserted the beaten track of plain English, and began to utter a voluble variety of unintelligible, yet articulate sounds. He concluded with the emphatic and twice repeated utterance of the words *Disco Capito*. A person present cried out, "It is written, Pray that ye may interpret." He answered, "The interpretation is given to me. *The shout of a mighty king is in the midst of you.*"

The foolishness of this story is sufficient to condemn the whole proceeding, and I quite agree with my friend Edward Craig, who expects that

the *Row heresy* will soon pass away as a cloud, that the enthusiasts who have never known any other religion will, too, probably lapse into infidelity, and that the few truly Christian people who have joined their ranks will return to their old associations, wounded and bleeding. It is, however, in no small degree astonishing that such wayward imaginations should have found a local habitation in Scotland, where the general characteristic, as it regards religion, is a phlegmatic and stiff adherence to a defined system.

The circumstances which I have now mentioned have naturally led to some discussion respecting the *gifts of the Spirit*. Thomas Erskine has published a two-penny pamphlet on the subject, the object of which is to prove, first, that when the early Christians spake with tongues, they were ignorant of the meaning of that which they uttered; and secondly, that there is good reason (*therefore*) to acknowledge the divine origin of the Port Glasgow gifts, as well as of those which were exercised in the days of Paul, among the Christians at Corinth. Supposing the premises to be correct, the weakness of the inference is extreme. Edward Craig has published

an able answer to this pamphlet, in which, by a sober paraphrase of 1 Cor. xiv., he shows the improbability (at least) of Erskine's premises, and by a brief narration of the Port Glasgow proceedings renders his inference justly ridiculous. Yet, I think he has preserved a respectful and charitable tone towards his well-meaning opponent. The last accounts which I have heard from the "west country," indicate a *progressive descent* into the absurd and preposterous.

I was struck with the simplicity of mind and genuine charitableness which Dr. Chalmers displayed in conversing upon this subject, before its issue was quite so apparent as it is at present.

*Chalmers.*—"Were Erskine at home, I should be very happy to bring you together. He is a most amiable and pleasing person, and one whose consistency of conduct proves the genuineness of his piety. It is true however that his imagination overpowers his other faculties. He assures me that a quarter of an hour's personal examination on the spot would convince me of the truth of the west-country miracles. Incredible as I am respecting it, I do not presume to determine what may or may not be included

within the infinite variety of divine dispensation. I just hold myself open to evidence."

Though we cannot but admire the modesty as well as justice of these sentiments, no man is more alive than Chalmers to the beautiful adaptation which is so clearly perceptible in the moral and spiritual dispensations of God (as well as in the works of nature) between the means and the end. The "portable evidence of Christianity" to which the Doctor is so justly attached, is the greatest example of it. No one who has both a scriptural and experimental knowledge of those divine arrangements which constitute the system of Christian doctrine, can fail to perceive their marvellous suitability to their professed end, the regeneration and salvation of mankind.

And in the same way may we perceive the fitness of the *machinery* employed for the purpose of establishing this new religion in the world, and of insuring both its early promulgation and permanent maintenance. I can conceive of nothing more precisely adapted to their proposed end than the miracles of Christ and his apostles. They were neither too much nor too little for the purpose. They were definite in their character,

equally so in their effect. They afforded precisely what was wanted, a palpable and undeniable evidence of the divine origin of Christianity ; and they were the means of so far overcoming the universal hostility of Jews and Gentiles, as to effect its firm establishment and rapid early propagation in the civilized world. A similar remark applies with equal force to that plenary *inspiration* of the apostles and their companions with which their miraculous powers were on a level, and by which they were qualified to become revealers and original disseminators of the truth. It was thus also that they were enabled to compose that Sacred Volume which was destined, together with its precursor, to be in all ages sufficient (under the influence of the Spirit) for the illumination and instruction of mankind.

Now in the whole of this spiritual machinery we see a precise adequacy, without either deficiency or surplus, of the means to the end ; and we trace in this fresh evidence of accordance the perfect skill of that Being who adjusts all "his matters," whether we are permitted to see it or not, in perfectly even balances.

The Church of Christ, firmly established in the

world, as a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid, and placed in possession of the whole Scripture, does not appear, as far as we can judge, to need the continuance either of miraculous powers or of apostolic inspiration. If men will not hear "Moses and the Prophets," consummated as they now are by Christ and his apostles, they indeed will not hear, though one rose from the dead. Yet who will not admit that the Church, for her edification and enlargement, requires those gifts of the Spirit which are suited to these purposes? Who will deny that *gifts* as well as grace are promised to her in every age? The promise is indeed clear. See Isa. lix. 21; Acts ii. 39. Nor are the origin and principle of the gifts of the Spirit altered. It is the same glorious Head who bestows them, the same Holy Spirit who qualifies for their exercise. They are identical in nature with the gifts of the apostles, though different in degree. The Christian Church in her advanced age is not left without her evangelists, or her pastors and teachers; and it is by inspiration still, taking the word in its just and proper sense, that they can alone be qualified to administer and apply those materials which prophets and apostles



produced, in days of old, under a far more abundant and exalted measure of the same influence. I do not make this remark in the peculiar character of a Quaker, because I believe that the serious Christian church, under every denomination, is to a certain extent prepared to adopt the sentiment. Nevertheless I heartily long to see the day when a greater degree of faith in the gifts of the Spirit, under their true character and within their proper sphere, shall prevail amongst all who love and serve the Lord. The very same argument from analogy, which prevents my expecting to find among Christians in the present day that miracle of tongues of which an account is given in 1 Cor. xiv., also satisfies me that we may reasonably expect the continuance of the gift of "prophecy" mentioned in the same chapter. And why? Because it is "a speaking unto men for edification and exhortation and comfort." Verse 3.

I can easily conceive that occasions might arise on which it would become highly probable that it would please Infinite Wisdom to ordain a miracle; such an occasion, for instance, as the attempt of the apostate Julian to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, when balls of fire issuing from Mount

Moriah utterly frustrated all his efforts. I can also conceive that a miracle might be permitted, for some reason altogether imperceptible to the intelligence of man. But such a circumstance is remote from the region of probabilities. Strong must be the evidence which would serve to convince me of the reality of wonders which scarcely appear to admit of any other comparison than with the unaccountable prodigies recorded in the annals of *ghostery*.

The evidence of accordance permitted us in spiritual things is remarkably analogous, to what is on every hand visible in the order of nature. When my wife accompanied Chalmers to the Museum, he did not appear to her to be peculiarly well-informed in the detailed natural history of the objects there collected; but his mind was called forth into its full energy by the lessons of Christian philosophy which the whole scene presented. The wonderful contrivances of nature—the perceptible purposes to which they are applied—the combination of parts in the same creature having no tendency to produce each other, yet necessary to each other's right action, as well as to the completeness and use of

the whole—for example, the wings and tails of birds, and the comparative length, according to the natural wants of the animal, of their legs and necks: it is delightful to trace in thousands of such combinations, the benevolence as well as the wisdom of the Creator.

*Chalmers.*—"Did you ever remark the way in which Cuvier goes to work to build a fossil animal? He finds, for example, the thigh-bone of some unknown carnivorous quadruped. A large and intimate knowledge of the adaptations of nature, enables him to determine the precise description of leg and foot, to which such a thigh-bone *ought* to belong. Having finished his picture of the whole leg, he perceives what *ought to be*, and therefore what *is* the shape of the loins, the back, the tail, &c.—and so he goes forward until the whole creature is erected. He knows what are the usual demands of Nature, as it relates to each particular part, and he builds accordingly. Now, this is so far from being a work of mere fancy, that he seldom or never fails to pourtray the animal aright: as has been proved in a vast variety of examples, by subsequent discoveries. What a delightful testimony does the

philosopher, in pursuing such a method, bear to the regularity and harmony with which the Author of Nature adapts his *means* to his *ends*."

Dr. Greville was mentioning to us another example of adaptation on a larger scale. "In temperate and cool climates, man requires animal food; and accordingly, Nature, in such climates, has provided an abundance of *pasture land*. In the tropics, where the natural food of man is fruit and vegetables, we do not find pastures; but the soil is immensely productive of fruit-trees. Now the quantity of *fruit* diet obtained in tropical climates, on a given space of land, greatly exceeds that of animal food produced on an equal surface of pasture in colder countries. This provision of the Creator exactly corresponds with the fact that a far greater *quantity* of *vegetable* than of *animal* food is required for the sustenance of our species."

It is evident that Dr. Chalmers is deeply impressed with the opinion that an overwhelming tide is but too likely ere long to sweep down many of our civil, literary, and religious institutions. The spirit which prevails abroad, he apprehends to be in somewhat active operation

at home, and he ascribes its existence and increase to the wide dissemination of *superficial* knowledge. In this respect he appears to be in full agreement with his friend Dr. Gordon, an eminent Evangelical minister of the Scotch kirk, who accompanied him one morning in a very short call upon us. Dr. Gordon is a slender person, in middle life, with an expressive and beautiful countenance, reserved and grave in his manner, and apparently accustomed to *rather* a narrow walk in the Christian Church. Yet he bears the character of a devoted and even holy Christian, and I was glad to hear him express his belief that evangelical religion is extending itself among the clergy of Scotland as well as in England—including many who are not classed with what is considered the “serious party.” But, like Chalmers, he has no confidence whatever in the permanence or even long continuance of the Church establishments either in Scotland or England. Chalmers is a great advocate for religious establishments.

*Chalmers.*—“I like to see the *earth* helping the *woman*. I do not plead very earnestly for any particular church; but I would have a well-

formed machinery fixed in every country—*docks of irrigation*, through which the predominant religion, whatever it is, may diffuse its streams of Christian instruction. I do not perceive that when such a provision is absent, men are prone to supply the deficiency for themselves, and the practical effect appears to be that a large proportion of the population is left without any religious instruction at all.”

I mentioned in reply that I had conversed on this subject with Dr. Milner, the well-known Episcopalian minister of New York; who, before he became a preacher of Christianity, was for many years the representative in Congress of the City of Philadelphia. He is a man of extensive knowledge and experience, and devoted to the civil and religious improvement of his country. When I inquired of him whether he thought that religion gained or lost in America, from the absence of an establishment, he expressed his conviction that genuine Christianity is far more diffused in the United States than it would have been had Church and State been united.

*Chalmers.*—“Well, I hold myself open to conviction; but my belief is, that a dry examination

of *numbers* in America would lead to a different conclusion; and that if all parties were *counted*, an overwhelming proportion of their scattered population would be found to be wholly destitute of the means of public worship and religious culture. The population in England and Scotland has immensely outgrown the provisions of the two establishments,—and what becomes of the surplus? They do not provide *themselves* with religious privileges, but are more than content to continue without them. I was furnished with a *picturesque argument* for establishments on the top of St. Paul's. When I looked eastward over the City of London I beheld it dotted with spires, for the city was built at a time when the church was able to meet the demands of the inhabitants. But westward the eye roams over a comparatively new town and new population—and a spire is hardly to be seen. On the whole I conclude, that unless the law of the land provides churches and a corresponding administration of the gospel, it is in vain to expect that the people will provide them for themselves."

It was observed by David Erskine that dissenting meeting-houses have no *spires*; and that

although a large proportion of our lower population was content to live without the means of public worship, yet that what the dissenters have effected for the religious culture of England and Scotland, notwithstanding the incumbency of the establishment, afforded a substantial contradiction to these views.

I told Dr. Chalmers that this was the only subject that I knew of in which I did not "sympathise with him." Nevertheless I fully *unite* in sincerely deprecating the fall of any of our religious institutions by the rude hand of anarchy and infidelity. It ought to be remarked that Dr. Chalmers' views on this subject are connected in his mind not with a bigoted attachment to any particular form of religion, but only with an earnest desire for the *maintenance of Christianity itself*. I think they are by no means destitute of weight,—yet, on the whole, I deliberately believe that the woman would do better if the earth would let her alone; and that the Great Head of the Church universal may be trusted for the maintenance and diffusion of his *own* cause, through an agency of his *own* forming. We cannot for a moment doubt the stability of



his promise: "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it."

With regard to America, I believe that the means of public religious instruction have overtaken the population, and followed it into remote regions, with a greater rapidity than could, under the peculiar circumstances, have been produced by any legal enactments. I suspect that Dr. Chalmers is in some degree misinformed on this part of the subject. He was speaking of the almost total absence of these means in New Orleans; but I find from John Padmore, a most respectable free black, now residing in Edinburgh, that this is an error; and that the places of worship in New Orleans, notwithstanding the peculiarly unfavourable character of the inhabitants, are very numerous.

N.B. John Padmore, now aged sixty, was once in slavery in Barbadoes. By dint of good conduct and industry he saved 200*l.*, with which he purchased his own freedom. He has since paid the like sum for the manumission of his aged father; and again, for that of his son. He underwent dreadful suffering from the cruelty of his master

and mistress when a slave; but they are now ruined, and Padmore has generously ministered to their necessities. He obtained a considerable property by trading at New Orleans and other parts of the United States. He is neat, cheerful, sensible and pious; and, with his wife, is living at Edinburgh, respected by his neighbours, and in great comfort. His whole appearance and demeanour are calculated to show the folly and iniquity of what one of the French deputies has lately called the aristocracy of the skin.

*Chalmers.*—"The Scotch establishment has one great advantage over that of England—it acknowledges no temporal head, and admits of no civil or parliamentary interference with its doctrine and discipline. The State helps to support it, but has nothing to do with the conduct of its ministrations. This devolves solely on its Synod. It is not so with the Church of England; but I would not demolish the Church of England on that account; I would only restore to her her own Convocation. Were some little poisonous stream to find its way into the sources of the Nile, by which all the waters of the river were rendered insalubrious, it would be a foolish remedy to cut up and

destroy the dykes by which those waters are conveyed through all the plains of Egypt. Good sense would dictate only the stopping up of the small polluting fountain.

“The new Revolution in France, and the commotions which have since taken place in other parts of Europe, have all occurred since our lot has been cast in Scotland. They have of course been the subject of daily thought, meditation, and converse. Although there is much in these changes, especially as it regards France, with which every liberal mind must sympathise, it is easy to perceive that the spirit of insubordination is increasingly prevalent in the world. I fear it runs through many, both of our private and public relations—parent and child, master and servant, magistrate and citizen, king and subject. It is probable also that the Church is affected by this change of feeling; and that in every denomination there is less of wholesome restraint, and a greater impatience of discipline, than was the case fifty or a hundred years ago. If this is one of the consequences of the march of intellect, it is assuredly a fearful one; and I know of no remedy but the diffusion of the Gospel. The Scriptures

will never cease to teach us to fulfil all our relative duties aright, and to be 'subject one to another in love.' I believe the spirit of rebellion against man is intimately associated with that of rebellion against God. That which can alone counteract both is genuine Christianity."

We were favoured one day with a call from a man of very superior parts, John Brown, the pious and able minister here of one of the largest seceding congregations. When we asked him, "What dost thou think will be the end of all these national commotions?" he answered emphatically, "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ."

To this scriptural declaration we can all set the seal of a willing belief; but in the meantime, tribulations and trials of faith may perhaps be ordained for the further purification of the followers of the Lamb, preparatory, it may be, to their final victory.

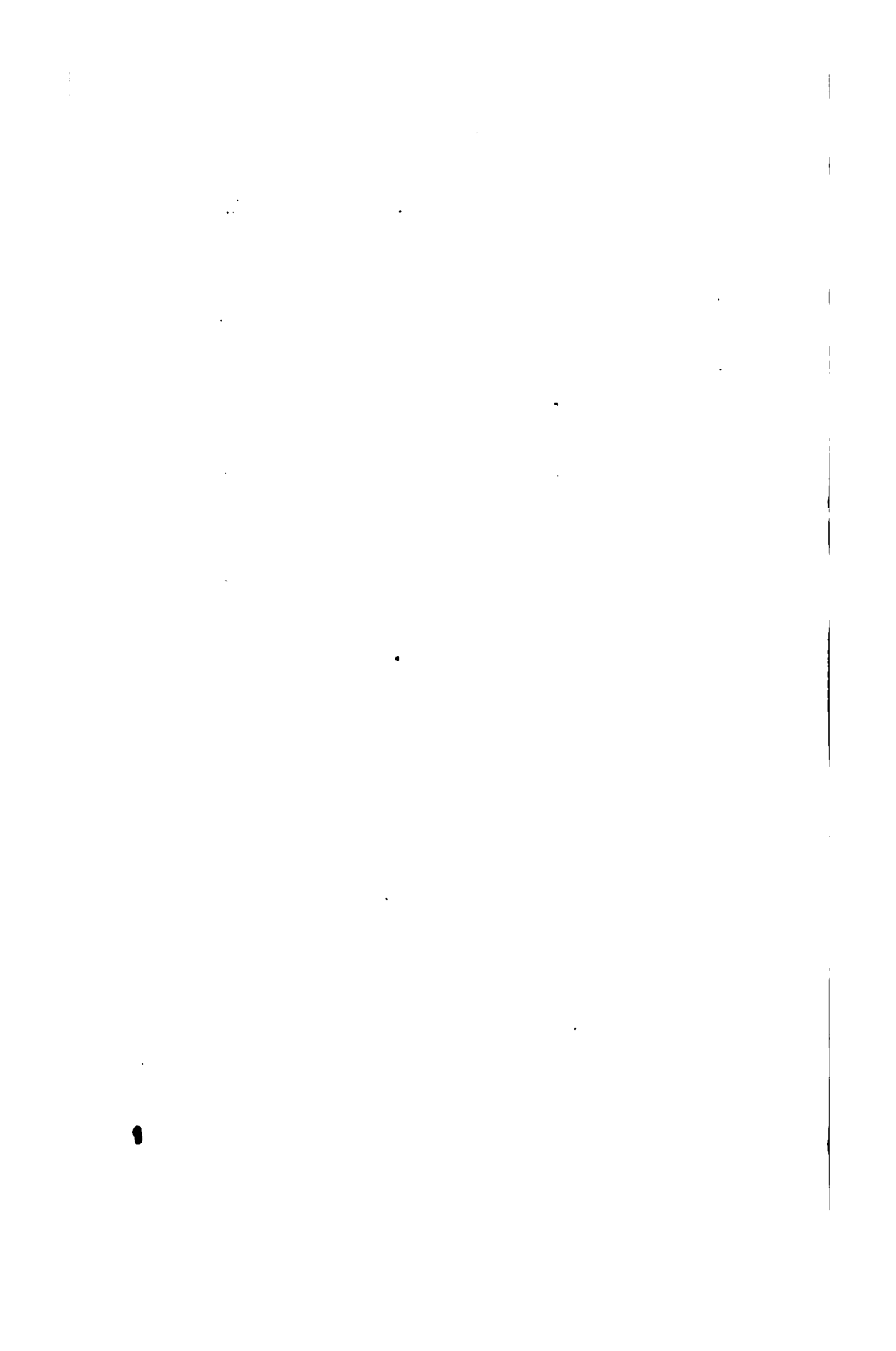
*Chalmers.*—"I think the Scriptures afford us good reason to believe that the ultimate diffusion of Christianity in the world must be preceded by commotion, and confusion, and distress of nations.

Look at the new French Revolution! There is much that one approves, at present, both in its tendency and in its results. But you see it has been effected by the growth of merely human intelligence—by the working of the unregenerate mind, without a particle of Christian principle. It is just the striving of the natural wisdom and pride of man, after that which we are apt to conceive to be the consummation of our happiness—a condition of independence. I am not one of those who underrate the value of civil and political liberty, but I am well assured that it is only the principles of Christianity which can impart true security, prosperity, and happiness, either to individuals or to nations. I am prepared to expect that on the efforts which are now making in the world to regenerate our species, without religion, God will impress the stamp of a solemn and expressive mockery.”

Notwithstanding the strength and consistency of these sentiments, I venture to indulge a humble hope that our Heavenly Father will deal gently with the workmanship of his hands, and that while the progress of the knowledge of Christianity (both of its evidences and its doctrines),

keeps pace with that of other knowledge, there will be a gradual diffusion of divine light, until all men shall acknowledge its superiority to that of man's wisdom, and shall bow the knee "at the name of Jesus."

We parted from our dear friends, Dr. Chalmers, his wife and daughters, as well as from some other persons who have been dear to us in Edinburgh, after a solemn and refreshing time of silence, ministry and prayer, 9th Mo. 25th, 1830. Our sojourn at Edinburgh of nearly five weeks appears to be now drawing to its close. I cannot conclude these "memorabilia" without recording our gratitude to our dear friends Alexander and Ann Cruickshank, under whose peaceful roof we have found so delightful a shelter, for their unabated and unbounded hospitality. May grace, mercy, and peace rest upon them, and on the many whom we love in Scotland !

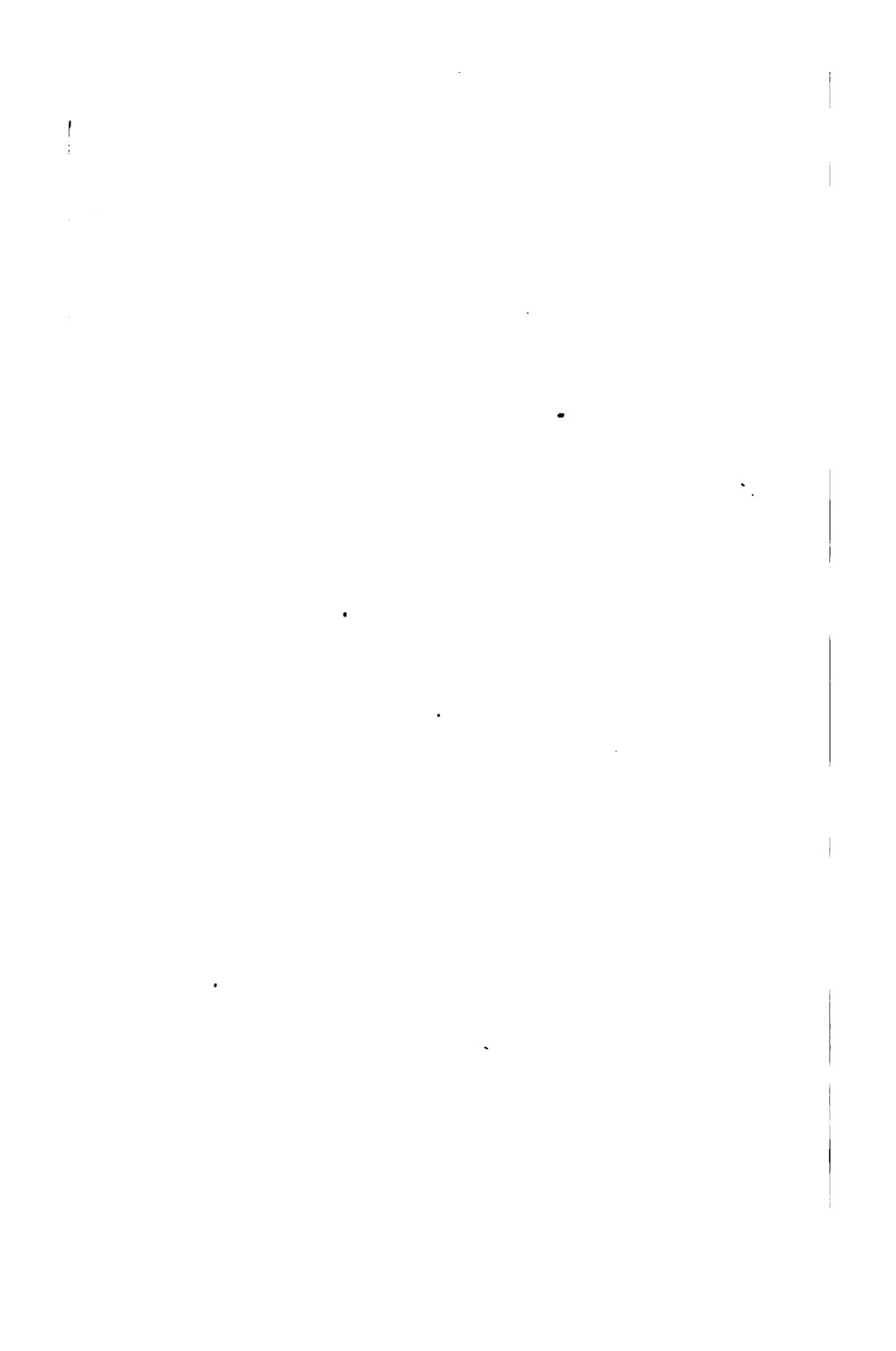


**CHALMERIANA.**

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**PART II.**





## PART II.

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“Earlham, 7 Mo. 24th, 1833.

As we were sitting in the drawing-room rather late on the evening of the 18th instant, Dr. Chalmers entered with our friend Charles Bridges, Vicar of Long Newton, Suffolk, as his companion. We were not expecting his arrival that evening, but the surprise was an agreeable one, and my wife and sister Catherine, as well as the children, united with me in giving our honoured guest a hearty welcome. He had been passing two or three weeks in London, in the very centre of the world's great whirlpool, but without any contamination as I believe from its spirit; and had been thrown into the company of many persons eminent for rank, power, and intellect. Crowds

of nobles and other elevated men and women had been following him in his ministry. The new Scotch Church, which holds about three thousand people, had been filled to excess again and again, and I trust the glad tidings of salvation had been sent forth with a new and native force into a multitude of hearts and understandings.

The Doctor looked a good deal worn with his exertions, and somewhat thinner than when we last met. He bears his simplicity along with him so obviously, that we all felt at ease with him, almost immediately, and with the exception of the quiet reading of a Psalm, the remainder of the evening passed in conversation. Dr. Chalmers is a man peculiarly susceptible of being pleased, looking at the objects which surround him through a favourable medium.

*Chalmers.*—"I have been travelling through Kent, Essex, and Suffolk, and now through Norfolk, the agricultural garden of England. It is a delightful country, varied in its surface, and clothed in greenness. As to the moulding and statuary of the scenery, we excel you in Scotland; but when I look over the fields of your country, I seem to be no longer looking through my naked

eye, but through an eye-glass, tinged with green, which throws a more vivid hue over nature than that to which I am accustomed."

The following morning we read the 3d of Ephesians, and I thought it as well to retain my usual office, as reader. I could scarcely avoid making a few remarks on the state of mind in the Jews, which rendered the accession of the Gentiles to the one church by a common faith, an almost overwhelming mystery;—also on the Apostle's paradox, "To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." We were afterwards, I trust, united in prayer and silence. The Doctor is accustomed to a rapid transition from commenting to prayer, and from prayer to the common course of things; but with all his magnificent powers, he is childlike and teachable, and seemed to have no difficulty in falling in with our modes. He passed most of the morning with Bridges, whose parochial gospel labours, and especially his cottage religious economy, are the object of his fervent admiration; and his afternoon (after Bridges' departure) was equally devoted to Amelia Opie, to whom he was very glad to be introduced. They seemed to suit exactly, and I do not wonder

at it; for Dr. Chalmers has repeatedly reminded me of Amelia Opie's father, the late Dr. Alderson. I was obliged to leave them in the evening for the Committee of the Bible Society, and found them *tête-à-tête* on my return.

On the following morning we conversed on the subject of the great minds with which he had been brought into contact. I asked him who was the most talented person with whom he had associated, especially in power of conversation. He said that Robert Hall was the greatest proficient he had known as a converser, and spoke in high terms of his talents and of his preaching. "But," said he, "I think Foster is of a higher order of intellect; he fetches his thoughts from a deeper spring. He is no great talker, and he writes very slowly, but he moves along in a region far above the common intellectual level. There are passages in his Essays of amazing depth and beauty, especially in that on 'Popular Ignorance.'" I am sorry to say, however, he is disposed to radicalism, and would scarcely object to substitute for the machinery of Oxford and Cambridge those endowed seats of religion and learning—"factories worked by steam!" We talked of the late Dr.

Parr's volubility and good-natured though unmeasured reproofs. Dr. Johnson, whom he evidently imitated, was capable of far more brutal severity.

*Chalmers.*—"When Johnson was at St. Andrews, the professors invited him to a sumptuous entertainment. Johnson ate his dinner in silence, and all seemed awed by the presence of the mighty stranger. At length, in the hope of banishing the awkwardness of this ill-timed solemnity, one of the professors exclaimed,—'Dr. Johnson, I hope you have made a good dinner.' 'Sir,' replied Johnson, 'I did not come into Scotland to be entertained with good dinners, but to see savage men and savage manners, and I have not been disappointed.' This surely was the speech of a far greater barbarian than any whom he was addressing."

This conversation took place at breakfast. I shall not soon forget the impression which Dr. Chalmers had made upon us during the preceding half-hour in the family reading. The fourth of Ephesians was the chapter in course. He read it through, and then made some highly instructive remarks on a single verse in it.

*Chalmers.*—"This chapter is too rich and full to allow of my giving any general comment upon it. I will therefore select a single verse. 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' The Holy Spirit is here spoken of, as in other parts of Scripture, as a personal agent. He is our guide and instructor, and the conscience is no more nor less than the organ of the inner man, through which He makes his will and his counsels known to us. You know that your human teacher is pleased with you when you obey him and act upon his lessons, and grieved and mortified when you turn a deaf and careless ear to him, when you neglect and disobey him. He may even be so provoked by your misconduct as to give up his office and teach you no longer. Just so is it with that divine Teacher, the Holy Spirit. He is grieved by your disobedience. He may even be so provoked by it as to withdraw his teaching, leave you to yourselves, and strive with you no longer, according to that passage in Genesis—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man." We all know from experience that when we disobey the dictates of the Spirit, as they are made manifest to our consciences, we gradually

become insensible. We are punished with deadness of heart and blindness of eye. On the contrary, the unfailing result of a watchful and ready obedience, is increased tenderness of conscience. The impressions of the Spirit become more palpable, and our holy Instructor rewards us for the behaviour which He approves, by an additional supply of light. This doctrine is plainly alluded to by our Saviour, 'He that hath my commandments, he it is that loveth me; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' So again in Isaiah, 'Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness; to undo the heavy burdens? &c. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry? &c. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rear-guard.' We often meet with cases of deep religious depression, and we find a great difficulty in treating them. We set in array before such persons the doctrines of Christianity, but there is a dark screen between their mental vision and the light of truth, which just prevents their accepting or applying our system of orthodoxy. Very pro-



bably the root of this mischief may be some kind of practical disobedience to the law of God. The Holy Spirit may have been offended, and may have withdrawn his enlightening influence. Although darkness may veil our minds, as it regards doctrine, no person can misunderstand the plain precepts of Scripture, 'Speak not evil one to another; Let him that stole steal no more; Children obey your parents in the Lord;' and a multitude of others. I could soon make out a code of them. Are we rendering a due obedience to all these precepts?

"The office of the Holy Spirit is two-fold. It is to reveal and apply divine truth to the soul; it is also to guide and strengthen us in the path of duty. There are an action and a reaction going on between faith and obedience. The more firmly and piously we believe, the more readily we obey; the more completely we obey, the more is our faith enlarged and confirmed. We are not to expect the revelation of any new truth. It is all contained within the four corners of the Bible. But to the obedient and believing soul, it shall be a book made up of illuminated letters."

In the course of the morning Dr. Chalmers,

accompanied me to Norwich. As we were going into the market-place he was arrested by catching a view of the steeple of St. Peter's Church, which he thought a noble structure. He is fond of ecclesiastical architecture, and it was entertaining to observe the pleasure which he enjoyed, while we were examining the church without and within. I heartily wished him a domicile in the pulpit, with two or three thousands of my fellow-citizens exposed to the artillery of his ministry. Dr. Chalmers could not fail to be again greatly struck by our ancient castle; and the panoramic view of the city, on which he feasted as we walked round the castle hill, was rendered delightful to him by the church steeples scattered over the scene. It was a picture of localized and endowed accommodations for spiritual purposes, which exactly accorded with some of his favourite systems. I ventured to insinuate that the internal reality was found in practice to fall very short of the outside appearance.

*Chalmers.*—"There are two distinct elements which constitute the practical efficacy of a religious establishment. The first is, the existence of an adequate machinery; the second is, working

that machinery well. If the machinery has been ill worked, or not worked at all, it by no means follows that it is in itself to be despised. Such a state of things affords no reason at all for our pulling it to pieces. We must apply our remedy to the element which is defective. We must improve the working of the machinery. We must endeavour to man it better; it will then bear with prodigious force on our population."

The Doctor is fully aware, and has repeatedly expressed his conviction, that this improved manning and working of the machinery can arise only from the diffusion of religious principle; or, in other words, from the work of Divine grace. But he would have the outward structure carefully preserved, that when the living waters flow, there may be channels ready for the irrigation of the whole land. Convinced as he is of the natural aversion of mankind to religion, he places no trust in what he calls the "voluntary principle." He would have these waters conveyed in pipes of man's making in every direction, and administered by a legalised and aggressive human effort to every habitation. I was not disposed to argue with my enlightened friend on almost the

only topic respecting which we differ—a topic which appears to me to occupy in his mind rather too large and prominent a place.

But the great questions must surely arise—Has the machinery a tendency in its own nature to prevent or impede the flowing of the waters? May we not trust the all-sufficiency of Him who is their very fountain, and who is head over all things to his Church? Would not these living streams pervade the land more abundantly, were they left, in absolute freedom, to pursue their own course and to find their own level?

The next objects of our attention were, the beautiful gateway to the Cathedral, which bears the name and image of Sir John Erpingham, the worthy who built the old church, now St. Andrew's Hall, as a penance for his sins; the Cathedral itself, of which the almost unrivalled tower was of course pointed out; and the elegant ruin in the Bishop's garden. No young or ardent traveller could derive more pleasure from such sights than the Doctor. We then called on our venerable Bishop, now in his ninetieth year; and very delightful was our interview. The dear old man was in good heart and health, reading with-

out spectacles, hearing without the smallest difficulty, and able to talk with his old vivacity. He was evidently much animated by seeing Dr. Chalmers; on the other hand Dr. Chalmers was charmed, as well he might be, with the Bishop.

*Bishop.*—"Dr. Chalmers, I am very glad to be introduced to you; I have just been reading your 'Bridgewater Essay,' with great satisfaction; I am especially pleased that you have insisted so much on the views of Bishop Butler, whom I have always reckoned to be one of the best and wisest of writers."

I remarked that it was strange that a writer of so liberal and comprehensive a cast should be accused of Popery.

*Bishop.*—"There is no ground for it—people will always call names—they will tell you" (addressing Dr. Chalmers with a smile) "that my friend Joseph here is a wicked fellow."

They then conversed on Dr. Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments.

*Bishop.*—"I am sorry to find from your work that his splendid passage respecting the necessity of a Mediator was omitted in the second edition."

*Chalmers.*—"The omission was probably owing to his intimacy with Hume."

I asked the Bishop whether he had not been acquainted with Hume.

*Bishop.*—"Oh yes, I used to meet with him at the old Lord Bathurst's; he was fond of a game of whist, to which I, too, had no objection, and we have sometimes played together. He was a very good-natured man; but I have heard him say cutting things about *us*—I mean the clergy."

The Bishop then repeated part of the passage from Dr. A. Smith, with peculiar accuracy and feeling :—"Man, when about to appear before a Being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the presence of his fellow-creatures, he may often justly elevate himself, and may have reason to think highly of his own character and conduct, compared to the still greater imperfection of theirs. But the case is quite different when about to appear before his infinite Creator. To such a Being he can scarcely imagine that his littleness and weakness should ever appear to be the proper objects, either of esteem or of reward. But he can easily conceive how the numberless violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, should render him the proper

object of aversion and punishment; neither can he see any reason why the Divine indignation should not be let loose, without any restraint, upon so vile an insect as he is sensible that he himself must appear to be.

“If he would still hope for happiness, he is conscious that he cannot demand it from the justice, but he must entreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition, at the thought of his past misconduct, are upon this account the sentiments which become him; and seem to be the only means which he has left for appeasing that wrath which he knows he has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these, and naturally fears lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime, by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other atonement, he imagines, must be made for him, beyond what he is capable of making, before the purity of the Divine justice can be reconciled to his manifold offences. The doctrines of revelation coincide in every respect with these original anticipations of nature; and as they teach us how little we can

depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they show us at the same time that the most powerful intercession has been made, and the most dreadful atonement has been paid, for our manifold transgressions and iniquities."

I do not precisely recollect whether the Bishop quoted the whole of this extract; but he told us that the passage had been fixed in his memory since his early manhood. When he afterwards spoke in his usual terms of his painlessness of body, and peace of mind, the latter more particularly was adverted to, I think by Dr. Chalmers, as a subject of especial gratitude and satisfaction.

"The more so," I added, "because it is grounded, as I trust, on that great doctrine of Christianity to which even Adam Smith has so feelingly alluded."

"Oh yes," said the Bishop, in a decided and emphatic tone, "that is the only thing, there is no other way."

This acknowledgment precisely corresponded with what I had before heard from him, and was very grateful both to myself and to Dr. Chalmers. The Bishop afterwards drew a lively picture of the talented but hot-headed Atterbury, Bishop of



Rochester, who was well known to his uncle, Lord Bathurst; and also of the mighty Warburton, in whose diocese he had once held a living, and with whom he was familiarly acquainted. He described him as a giant in conversation, and a fearless champion against Hume and other infidels.

“ I have no liking for the men,” said he, “ and no fear of their talents.”

With the exception of Lord Bathurst and a few others, he indulged in a sort of scorn against the nobles of the land.

“ As for you lords,” said he, in the Bishop’s hearing, “ your venison is but a poor repayment for the fatigue of listening to your conversation.”

I suppose that, like Johnson, he imagined himself privileged to be a bear!

*Bishop.*—“ His wife too had a spirit of her own; she used to call her husband, Brigadier Moses!”

I was glad to hear Chalmers and the Bishop fully according in the praise of Warburton’s “ Julian;” which surely contains important and specific, though somewhat indirect evidence, of the Truth as it is in Jesus.

After our friend C—— W—— had conducted the Doctor to some others of our ecclesiastical remains, we returned home to dinner. It is always pleasant to watch the noble expression of Dr. Chalmer's countenance; but he is often very quiet in a large party. I never saw a man who appeared to be more destitute of vanity, or less alive to any wish to be brilliant. I even question whether he fully possesses the *par sui estimatio*. He was simple and agreeable that afternoon, but made no peculiar efforts. In the evening we collected together in the drawing-room, and he read to us the fourth of Romans. For his comment he selected the doctrine therein unfolded, of righteousness imputed without the deeds of the law.

*Chalmers.*—"It is of the highest importance to distinguish between right and rightness. The former word is used in a legal and forensic sense, to designate the claim which we possess upon any privilege; but 'rightness' from the adjective, 'right,' properly describes the conduct and character of the man. It is utterly impossible for any man to obtain a right—a legal or forensic claim—for an entrance into future happiness, by any works of his own. Our works condemn us—for we are

transgressors of the law ; and, even had we never transgressed it, we should be unprofitable servants, in possession of no title at all to the everlasting reward. When we are justified by faith in the crucified Redeemer—when the righteousness of Him who meritoriously fulfilled the whole law is imputed to us—then do we become invested with our right to the heavenly inheritance. A glorious interchange takes place between the Saviour and the sinner. On him was laid the burthen of our sins ; and he bore the penalty of them. To us is ascribed his perfect righteousness, and we reap the reward of it. Should you strive ever so strenuously to obtain that right in any other way, all your efforts will be fruitless—they would end in disappointment and confusion ! But unless there be a practical rightness, as well as a legal right, you will never be fit for the exercises and joys of heaven. You must be made meet for your eternal inheritance before you can enjoy it ; you must yourselves be holy, before you can be fitted for the happiness of which holiness is the substance. I may illustrate the doctrine in a very homely manner—I care not how homely, if I just make myself intelligible. An

oratorio is about to be celebrated : a friend has given me a ticket of admission ; and, in virtue of the purchase which he has made of it, I am invested with a right of entrance. But of what use will be my ticket of admission, if I have never cultivated an ear for music—if I have, on the contrary, an utter distaste for it ? In such case the attendance on the oratorio would be to me a mere imprisonment—the sacred melody a penance and not a reward. Think of a man who is immersed in sensuality, and in the spirit of the world ; what possible capacity can he have for the exercises and joys of heaven ? We are to conceive of heaven as of a state, as well as a place. Were it possible that such a man should enter heaven, it would be to him a prison—a drear abode of interminable irksomeness. But, in point of fact, he cannot truly have any right of entrance. Our faith in Jesus can never be the means of imparting this right to us, unless it be of such a nature as to produce the rightness which qualifies for the enjoyment.”

The next day was the Sabbath, a time of rest, and, I trust, of profitable enjoyment to us all ; each pursuing, in this abode of liberty, the course

of religious service most satisfactory to himself. Dr. Chalmers went to our parish church, with which he was pleased, and rested in the afternoon. We could not grudge him this rest, for he had been much fatigued in London, and required the change. At the same time, knowing as I do his vast powers, and the efficacy of his private ministry, I much regret, for the sake of the public, that when in England he is excluded from almost all pulpits. The discipline of the Church of England prevents his access to theirs ; and his strong views on the abstract question of establishments form a bar, in his own mind, to the occupation of those of the Dissenters. How is it that the systems of man so easily prevail in impeding the flowing forth of the word of truth ? How is it that we are still so prone to put the Spirit into buckram ?

Our own meetings were solemn and satisfactory, and on our return in the evening, our own family, our village neighbours, and some young friends from Norwich, assembled in the dining-room, a party of at least fifty persons. Dr. Chalmers read us a few verses in Matt. vii., and afterwards read, with extemporaneous appeals interspersed,

one of his own manuscript sermons on verse 11 :  
“ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ? ” To give any sketch of this discourse, which should do it justice, or convey to the reader the feeling which it produced in the hearer and seer, is wholly beyond my power.

Dr. Chalmers' mighty mind is so poured forth on such an occasion, and is so indicated by the illuminations of his countenance, and the expressive movements of his head and hands, and there is at the same time so evident an unction accompanying the flowing of the word, that the effect is altogether truly remarkable. He seems possessed with a sort of sacred determination to fix every point, as it occurs, in the understanding of his hearers ; and under a variety of forms, reiterates the same essential statement, until his victory is fairly gained. And every now and then in the course of this proceeding (which defies the charge of tautology, and actually produces no tedium), and especially when he is winding up his whole subject, he breaks forth in a blaze

of eloquence. On the present occasion the bulk of his remarks were addressed to this peculiarity in the text—that mankind, giving good gifts unto their children, are nevertheless described as evil. He illustrated the subject by drawing an affecting picture of the tenderness of a mother towards her offspring—her smile of intimate delight when they play around her in health and happiness—her brow of sorrow and anxiety when pain is afflicting them, or disease has laid them low. He showed us that such affections are good in themselves; they almost wear the garb of moral virtue in dumb animals, and as they are unfolded in the human species, they are peculiarly lovely; not only lovely indeed, but of great ability, because they lead us to bestow on our children, in abundance, all those good things of which they stand in need. Convinced as he was of the corruption of human nature, he would do human nature justice, and would carefully refrain from pushing any theological system beyond the boundary of practical and experimental truth. He would allow that men of the world often showed forth a variety of qualities good in themselves and useful to society. Benevolence and integrity

were by no means uncommon amongst them. There were persons very little under the influence of religion, who would do a great deal to serve their neighbour; there were others who would rather die, than depart from a bold and reputable integrity, either in word or deed. He would also allow that there were great differences amongst mankind in these respects; that some were far more affectionate, benevolent, or true than others; that some might therefore be justly called a great deal better than their neighbours. Nevertheless, according to the estimate held forth by our Saviour, all are evil. And why? Because in the midst of all these instinctive and constitutional virtues, God is forgotten. A sweeping charge of ungodliness may be made against us all—made against the benevolent, the true, the polite, the affectionate, just as undeniably as against those who are comparatively destitute of these characteristics.

It may be said that these are the very virtues which God himself enjoins upon us, and which true Christians are peculiarly called upon to practise; and so they are. But if they do not spring from a right motive,—even from the love of God,



—they are virtues no longer, of no account in the record of the Most High, of no weight in the balance of the Sanctuary! This doctrine may be illustrated in a most familiar manner. It may be the will of a parent that his child should take a regular daily walk, for the benefit of his health. The child is accustomed to take such a walk, and the parent is pleased with the fact; but the virtue of the action depends entirely upon the motive. The child may do it solely for his own gratification, or he may do it in obedience to the parental command. In the latter case, the act is virtuous, in the former case it is not. Nothing can deserve the character or claim the name of righteousness which has no reference to the will of our Heavenly Father. In whatsoever degree we may abound in constitutional good qualities, without godliness we are evil, utterly evil, in the sight of Him who searches the heart and knows the secret springs of all our actions.

Having thus, with uncommon vigour and plainness, convinced us of sin, Dr. Chalmers adverted to the more direct bearing of our Lord's illustration. The parent will not put his child off with a counterfeit. There is some resemblance

between a loaf and a stone. There is some similarity between a fish and a serpent: when the child asks for a fish, the parent will not put him off with a serpent; he will not be satisfied in supplying him with the mere semblance and pretence of food. How much more, then, will our Heavenly Father bestow upon us those things which are actually and essentially good? It is worthy of remark that in the parallel passage of Luke's gospel, the term "good things" is omitted, and the term "Holy Spirit" is inserted instead. For in the gift of the Holy Spirit, that of every true spiritual blessing is virtually included. If we diligently seek God, and earnestly pray for his Holy Spirit, he will not put us off with a counterfeit; he will give us that actual grace by which our souls will be sustained and nourished. He will bestow upon us the faith which saves, and the holiness which fits for heaven. In conclusion, Dr. Chalmers dwelt with great force on the doctrine of a Mediator. Notwithstanding the delightful encouragement to filial dependence on God, and prayer, held out to us in this passage, it is never to be forgotten, that the uniform effect of sin is to bar our access unto God, and, that one thing alone

has opened that access for our fallen race, even his own redeeming love in Christ Jesus. Through the scheme of mediation unfolded to us in the Gospel, the stream of divine mercy is gloriously poured forth over a guilty world, while the holiness of the lawgiver and the supreme authority of his law are more than ever illustrated and confirmed.

The next morning, the 22nd, I read the 1st of James, and dwelt a little on the Christian law of liberty. Knowing the variety of influences to which we are exposed, and the innumerable prejudices to which we are liable, I felt and expressed a solicitude that we might all stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and that we may not be entangled again with any yoke of bondage. W. Y—— breakfasted with us, and with his usual strong sense and talent called forth the energies of Dr. Chalmers' mind. They conversed on the subject of special providence, and of the unseen, yet unceasing superintendence of the Creator over all the events which occur in this lower world.

W. Y.—“Mr. Barbauld, the husband of the authoress, was once a resident in my house. He

was a man of low opinions in religion, and denied the agency of an unseen Spirit on the mind of man. I remarked, that when the mind was determined to a certain right action, by a combination of circumstances, productive of the adequate motives, and meeting from various quarters precisely at the right point for the purpose in view, this was in itself a sufficient evidence of an especial providence, and might be regarded as the instrumentality through which the Holy Spirit acts. Mr. Barbauld admitted the justice of the argument."

Chalmers expressed his satisfaction in this view of the subject; and after some allusions to the "Natural History of Enthusiasm," beautifully unfolded his own method of reconciling the acts of a special providence with the common order of "nature's sequences,"\* W. Y—— supported the doctrine, that nature is governed through the means of *general laws* alone—laws which broadly and obviously mark the wisdom and benevolence of God. When a moth flies into a candle, he

\* This method has been already described in the "Chalmeriana," Part I.

does not attribute the circumstance to the immediate providence of God, but regards it as a partial result of one of these laws; namely, of the law that animals should be excited or attracted by light and heat. The general law is obviously beneficent; the partial result of it (productive of pain and death to the insect) belongs to the imperfection which God has permitted to be stamped on this lower—this fallen world.

Dr. Chalmers confessed his accordance with these sentiments; but we all agreed in the conviction that the reconciled and obedient children of God are objects of his perpetual and peculiar providence,—that not a hair falls from their head without their Father's knowledge!

W. Y—— expressed his admiration of the masterly manner in which Dr. Chalmers, in his "Bridgewater Essay," has fixed on the Atheist a moral obligation to inquire into the truth of religion; but, said he, might not the disciple of Irving, by the same rule, oblige us to an inquiry into the supposed evidences of their favourite doctrine, that Christ is about to reappear, and to reign personally on earth? Might not even the

Mahometan impose on the Christian a similar necessity, as it relates to the pretensions of the false prophet?

*Chalmers.*—"In order to fix such an obligation, there must always be a *primâ facie* evidence. Such there is in abundance for the being of a God, and also for the truth of Christianity; but not so for the truth of Mahometanism. With respect to the doctrine that Christ is coming to reign personally on earth, it is very right to examine the Scriptures in reference to the subject; but there is a good reason, nevertheless, why that method of appeal which I have adopted towards the Atheist, would not apply to those who disbelieve this doctrine. It is just this, that were it ever so true it would demand of the Christian no change of practice."

This remark precisely coincides with the view which I have always taken of the subject. Christ is already the King of kings, the spiritual and omnipresent Governor of his Church. It is our duty at the present hour, and never can cease to be our duty, to obey Him in all things.

In the course of the morning, the doctor and I walked down to a fir grove at the extremity of

the park, where a colony of herons have lately formed a settlement. He was as much interested and pleased as a schoolboy would have been, in watching the singular appearance, gestures, and sounds of these birds. His mind seemed quite occupied by the fitness between the length of their necks and that of their legs, and also by the circumstance, that as they swim not, but only stand in the waters, they do not, like other aquatic birds, require webs to their feet, and therefore have none! It is remarkably the habit of Dr. Chalmers' mind, to see and feel God in everything; and what can be more desirable? As we were leaving the grove, I alluded to what he called, in his discourse on the preceding evening, "constitutional and instinctive virtues." I asked him whether some of these were not too good for fallen nature; and whether we might not ascribe them, at least in part, to a certain measure of divine influence.

*Chalmers.*—"I do not consider any virtue to be of divine origin which is exercised without a reference to God. This I hold to be the true test."

I expressed an opinion that these virtues were often exercised, with a certain degree of reference

to God, by persons who were not decidedly religious ; and even by those who knew nothing of Christianity. I asked whether this was not the case, for example, with Cicero ? Dr. Chalmers appears to have no prejudice against such a view of the subject, and is by no means disposed to run down the degree of virtue by which many of the ancient heathen were distinguished.

*Dr. Chalmers.*—" I look upon the question of the salvability of the heathen as a *terra incognita* which it is not my business to investigate. After I had concluded one of my sermons in the Scotch Church in London, I was visited in the vestry by Ramohunroy, the Hindoo Brahmin. He asked me what would become of the souls of the heathen, who, while destitute of the knowledge of the Christian religion, endeavoured to obey that divine law by which the natural conscience is illuminated ? I told him that I had then no time to enter into the subject, nor was it within my proper province. I would only remark that there was a sufficient difference between the future prospects of the heathen and those of Christian believers, to justify the utmost extent and arduity of missionary exertions."



We talked of a correspondence which had taken place between Ely Stanley and himself, respecting the Irish Education Bill. It appears that the Chief Secretary had written to him for his opinion of the measure, an opinion which would of course have the greater weight with the Whig minister, because of Dr. Chalmers' well-known liberal views respecting "Roman Catholic Emancipation."

*Chalmers.*—"I expressed my disapprobation of the system. I think we ought to have a 'Bible Class' in every school instituted by national authority, and that it should be left to the parents of the children to decide whether they should attend that class or not. A Roman Catholic child might avail himself of all the other parts of instruction afforded in the school, and might nevertheless withdraw from the Bible class at the bidding of his parent. According to the present system, the Bible is just treated as the Dissenter, instead of the Roman Catholic. It is not that the Catholic withdraws because he does not like the Bible; it is that the Bible withdraws, because the Catholic does not like it."

I observed that the use of extracts from Scrip-

ture in School appeared to me to be unobjectionable.

*Chalmers.*—"Very true; but in this case there is an objectionable principle: it is the omission of parts of Scripture, on the ground that a certain class of men object to their being read."

I must confess that these remarks have considerable weight, and considered in connexion with the eagerness, displayed by the Roman Catholics in the adoption of the plan, have a good deal shaken my confidence in its advantages.

On this day F. C—— joined our party, and two of the Norwich Clergy, with Dr. A—— and his wife and L. A——, dined with us. We had some interesting conversation after dinner, on the subject of Pauperism and the English Poor-laws. Chalmers is more confirmed than ever in his view of this subject, and looks forward with extreme apprehension to the convulsion which the obstinate maintenance of these laws must, in his opinion, in the end occasion. He seems to despair of a natural remedy, and looks to a violent one, as the almost inevitable result of the inveterate attachment of England to her Poor-laws. His

sentiments on the subject appear to be as follows :—

I. That God has implanted in the mental constitution of man certain principles, which by their own working, and without any enactment of them by human laws, are calculated to secure the economic well-being of human society. One of these is the possessory principle, which lies at the foundation of property; another is the benevolent principle, which induces men, in every class of society, to have compassion one on another, and to relieve distress.

II. That our system of Poor-laws offends against both these principles, and mars them in their intended operation. It gives to the poor a lien on the produce of land, in spite of the ownership of its true possessors, and thus opposes the possessory principle; and, again, by rendering beneficence compulsory, it undermines benevolence, and with it, of course, the good-will and gratitude of the recipient. Thus it substitutes, for the natural interchange of respect and affection for kindly offices, a perpetual and heart-rending conflict between the natural rights of property, and the legal rights of the poor.

III. That the inevitable tendency of these provisions on the poor is, first, to counteract their natural desire to help one another, and thus to loosen both the family and the social tie; secondly, to weaken and relax their endeavours to help themselves; and, thirdly, to rob them of that wholesome care for the future, which can alone ensure economy and saving, and prevent improvident marriages.

IV. That the actual result is a superabundant pauperized and immoral population.

V. That there is no cure for the evil but the abolition of the law, followed up by a systematic and comprehensive plan of general education, and especially of moral and religious culture.

I need not here revert to the Doctor's successful experiment of recalling from a condition of more than incipient pauperism a manufacturing population of ten thousand human beings, in the parish of St. John in Glasgow; except for the purpose of recording his renewed assurance that his plan continues to answer well, and that there has been no recurrence to the old system of legalized relief. This fact is the more remarkable, because Dr. Chalmers' personal influence has now

for many years been withdrawn from the parish. The Doctor is a most modest man, but he would, nevertheless, like very well to be enthroned for a season, in order to get rid of English pauperism.

*Chalmers.*—"I would just accept a dictatorship, in order to effect the object; and in applying my curative measures, I would proceed in a very cautious manner. My remedy should be gradual in its operation, both nationally and parochially. The law for the abolition of pauperism should be only permissive; every parish being left to its own option, to use or not use the law. A certain number would set the example, the measure would be sure to succeed, and, by the force of experiment alone, the new system would spread. Again, in the individual parishes, I would do nothing more than prevent the accession of new cases. I would do no violence to the habits of the paupers who now are; only pauperism should have no life to grow by; it should die out by degrees and be extinguished."

Small voluntary collections are made for the poor in the parishes in Scotland. Dr. Chalmers would scarcely approve even of these, were it not for the fact that the working class subscribe their

little quotas to the purse of benevolence, and by the very act, draw a line (not soon passed over) between themselves and pauperism.

*Chalmers.*—"A Scottish labourer considers it disgraceful to marry until he has a well-furnished cottage with a 'mound of linen,' ready for the reception of his wife."

It does not appear that Dr. Chalmers' economic studies prevented his being a most effective religious pastor over the parish of St. John's; and when he gave up this extensive cure for a professorship of divinity, great was the clamour which was excited against the change in the religious world.

*Chalmers.*—"My object was to effect the greatest quantum of good. I told my friends that I should be better engaged in making salt, than in salting a single leg of beef."

In this respect, he occupies a station which in point of effect is very similar to Simeon's; it is well that the churches of England and Scotland have two such salt-makers.

In the evening our party collected in the drawing-room, and Dr. Chalmers read to us the latter part of the 7th of Romans. He afterwards made

some admirable remarks on the doctrine of perfection.

*Chalmers.*—"It is an old controversy, whether in these verses the apostle is speaking in the person of an unregenerate man, or unfolding his own actual experience as a child of grace. For my own part, I have no difficulty in adopting the latter conclusion; for this plain reason,—that one sure characteristic of the unregenerate man, is an insensibility to his own sinfulness, or at least a very superficial and inadequate feeling of it. On the other hand, the more we know of Christ, and the further we advance in the Christian course, the more alive are we to the purity of the law of God, and the more palpable to ourselves becomes our own iniquity. The subject cannot be better illustrated than by Dr. Owen. He says that if we swim down the river with the stream, we are carried along with very little perception of its impulse; but that if we turn round and swim against the stream, we forthwith discover its force and impetuosity. The convert to Christianity makes head against a river of corruption, and the more rapid his advance, the more lively is his sense of the opposing current.

“The doctrine of perfection may be imbibed in a sense which I hold to be altogether unscriptural. If it is imagined that any man may become perfect in this world, in such a sense as that he may safely commit himself to the spontaneity of his own inclinations, I must assert that such a notion is in contradiction to Scripture. But if by perfection is meant such a deep abiding sense of the iniquity of our own hearts as shall lead to an increasing and always availing dependence on the grace of God—if it is the perpetual bringing of our emptiness to the fulness which is in Christ—then I will say that this is the true standard of action which the Scriptures uphold in our view. I have never known a perfect man even in this sense; but I will not deny the possibility of such attainment. When I read our Saviour’s precept, ‘Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,’ I have no wish to circumscribe the operation of an omnipotent Spirit on the heart of man: but it seems to me that those who have made as large advances as we can anywhere meet with towards such a state, might nevertheless apply to themselves the whole of the apostle’s plaintive language respecting indwelling sin. The



natural man is corrupt, and we shall never be delivered from the conflict which this corruption occasions until this polluted body is dissolved and withers into dust.

“Let us just imagine the case of Saul, a man of a wicked and violent temper. David’s harp is given to him for a remedy. So long as David’s harp is playing, he is smooth and gentle as a lamb; but let the music cease—let the remedial influence be withdrawn even for a moment, and all is wrath and violence again!

“There are three states to which we might look, each of which has its distinctive character. There is the state of the unregenerate man, in whom sin maintains an undivided sway. There is that of the glorified saint, in whom grace is absolutely and for ever triumphant. There is also the intermediate state of the Christian on earth, in whom, although grace is predominant, two opposite principles are at work, which will carry on a warfare against each other, until his latest breath. It may be speculative—but I am inclined to the opinion that the angels in heaven, being in possession of a nature absolutely sinless, may be trusted to the spontaneity of their own inclinations; and it may be

just the same with the spirits of the just made perfect, who there enjoy the repose of victory. But for ourselves there is no security except in perpetual watchfulness and prayer. Again I would say, Let us on every occasion of life, even the most familiar, learn to bring our emptiness to the fulness which is in Christ. Let us say, 'Lord enable me to do this thing according to thy will,' and we need not be faint-hearted. We shall come off more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

On the following morning, the 23d, our party was increased by several guests from Norwich, Dr. Chalmers was kind enough again to take the Bible. He read the 5th chapter of 1st Thess.—a remarkably impressive part of the Scripture; but he confined his remarks to a single verse—"Quench not the Spirit—despise not prophesyings."

*Chalmers.*—"The precepts contained in this verse are each of them of great importance, and they are most happily combined. They are distinct from each other, and may even be contrasted; and yet they coincide with a wondrous harmony. By the word prophesyings we are not here to

understand predictions, but declarations of divine truth. It was the office of the prophets or inspired servants of God, to proclaim the realities of true religion; and the fulfilment of this office was rightly called prophesying. Prophesying therefore is the instrument by which the Spirit acts; and the Spirit is the power by whom prophesying is applied. In vain for the purpose of our soul's salvation is the external revelation of divine truth, unless for its application to our understanding and our heart we are brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The preacher who is engaged in declaring to others the truths which the Bible contains, and in pressing them upon the attention of his hearers, may be conceived of as holding in his hand a stamp engraven with certain characters, which it is his desire to impress upon some substance hard to be penetrated. His own strength is insufficient for the purpose; when he applies the stamp, the characters, notwithstanding all his efforts, are not impressed; but let his hand be guided by some superior skill, and driven by some unseen power of wondrous efficacy, and the impression shall be made with ease, even in a most unyielding tablet. Still it is, no

new truth which the Spirit thus impresses; the letters in the stamp are fixed and unchanging. The Scriptures contain the whole record,—a record to which no addition is required. Let the eye be directed to an extensive and distant landscape, of which, by its natural force, it is wholly unable to distinguish the exact features: the telescope will just reveal them all to you; but it will add nothing to the landscape.

“ While, therefore, it ought to be our first and constant endeavour to yield ourselves to the influence of the Spirit, to obey his dictates, and to obtain his illuminations, we must be diligent in the use of the appointed means; we must not despise prophesyings; we must delight ourselves in the study of Scripture; our souls must always be turned towards the truth. A blind man may have his sight restored by some miraculous agency; but comparatively useless would be the miracle, were his back for ever turned on the object which it was the most important for him to behold. Let us go forth to meet the Sun of Righteousness, that when our vision is restored we may behold his glory.”

Our breakfast party this morning was very

pleasant, and Dr. Chalmers' vein of humour (I may truly call it *good* humour, for it is at once playful and innocuous,) was more than usually productive. T. B.—, an old friend of Irving's, being of the party, we naturally conversed a little respecting that extraordinary individual. Dr. Chalmers does full justice both to his talents and his integrity, and is quite aware of the nobler parts of his character.

*Chalmers.*—"I used to regard him as a specimen of the Evangelical character, grafted on that of the old Roman."

Irving's expositions and preaching were spoken of; and it was agreed by those present who had heard him, that although he lays a strong hold on the imagination and feelings, his reasoning is often defective.

*Chalmers.*—"He is in one respect like Coleridge. He has imbibed a German metaphysical notion, that reason is something supernal, far above the region of the understanding. 'Your Scotchmen,' said he to me, 'are so fond of going round a thought, and round a thought, till you know it all so precisely; for my part I like to have my subject illumined through a mist!' Yet Irving, too, is

a Scot, and has a wonderful respect for his own people."

*Chalmers.*—"Dr. Morison of Canton called on me one day, and seemed a good deal ruffled by a sermon which he had lately been hearing from Irving, in support of the London Missionary Society. The sermon was good, but he had begun it with an insult on his audience; and that Dr. Morison's account was correct, I afterwards found from a printed copy of the discourse. When he had ascended the pulpit, he entered on a kind of audible soliloquy. 'How shall I encourage myself,' said he, 'to address the thronging multitude by whom I am now surrounded? I will even cast about for a few examples! There are three of a notable character, which now strike me; that of the Apostle Paul preaching before the Jewish Sanhedrim; that of Bernard Gilpin preaching before the Court of King Edward the Sixth; and that of a Scottish Divine preaching before the Commissioner of the General Assembly.

"On these three examples, as on a sacred tripod, I feel my spirit propped; but especially the last,—the Scottish Divine preaching before the Commissioner of the General Assembly. If

he can venture to encounter the hoary-headed eldership and substantial theology of the North, surely I may without fear address myself to the flimsy evangelism of the South!’ ”

The tongues, miracles, &c., which have so much occupied the attention and engaged the credulity of some of Irving’s followers, were adverted to; and Chalmers, with his usual simplicity, said, “ I was in no hurry to condemn these things,—I just waited for evidence.” It was agreed on all hands that evidence had totally failed.

*Chalmers.*—“ Their attempts to perform miracles have been very unsuccessful in Scotland. Two of these zealous but deluded young ladies fixed on a poor Scotch peasant—by name John Maclashlan—who had broken his leg, as a proper subject for an effort of this description; but when they pronounced the *verba solemnia*—‘ Rise up and walk’—poor John’s only response was, ‘ Indeed, ladies, I am not *no fut*’—*i.e.* I am not fit.”

We were talking of Fuller, the quaint historian of the Church of England. I remarked that he was fond of a dash of humour.

“ Yes,” said Chalmers, “ his book is dashed all over with it. Even so grave a subject as the death

of a Bishop he cannot treat without humour. Some poor Bishop died of a quinsy.

“‘So after all,’ says Fuller, ‘he died not for want of food, but for want of a throat to swallow it!’”

Our dear friend seemed quite to enjoy an easy flow of playful conversation; especially during a short period which a young friend of ours seized upon each morning after breakfast, for the purpose of drawing his likeness. She succeeded admirably, and the Doctor did not fail to express his agreeable surprise, on the discovery that his profile was so good a one!

In the course of that morning we made several calls in Norwich, and spent the afternoon and evening without any addition to our home party except F. and R. C—— and himself. The conversation was entertaining and instructive. We were speaking of a certain class of persons, who united to a great apparent gentleness and pliability a peculiarly effective resistance to all reform in Church or State.

F. C.—“I have heard Wilberforce compare men of this description to sacks of wool lying before artillery, yielding to all appearance to the



impulse of the cannon balls, yet effectually stopping their progress."

*Chalmers.*—"The great fear I entertain respecting the operation of the Reform Bill, is, lest it should throw the legislative power into the hands of men of business, already full of all kinds of occupation, to the exclusion of men who have leisure for deep study and reflection, and are, therefore, able to cope with great principles on the various subjects of legislation. There is a fine passage in Ecclesiasticus, on the danger of intrusting with the arcana of Government men whose hearts and hands are full of the common business of life. I wish we were more alive to the principles which are there unfolded. It is an alarming fact, that in order to effect a paltry saving of two or three thousand pounds per annum, that great work, the trigonometrical survey of Great Britain, was on the point of being left incomplete. It was saved by a majority of only two votes in a Committee of the House of Commons."

The passage to which Dr. Chalmers alluded, and which we forthwith read together, is well worthy of notice. It is in chapter xxxviii. and

begins as follows:—"How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks? He giveth his mind to make furrows, and is diligent to give the kine fodder." The writer then goes on to describe in a vivid manner the work of the carpenter, the seal-cutter, the smith, and the potter; and adds, "Without these cannot a city be inhabited, and they shall not go when they will, nor go up and down. They shall not be sought for in public counsels, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the judge's seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment, and they shall not be found where parables are spoken."

*Chalmers.*—"I take great delight in the book of Ecclesiasticus. Were I to speak merely from my own judgment of the internal evidence, I should say that it contains almost equal marks of inspiration with the book of Proverbs. But the New Testament gives no countenance to such an opinion. There is no book of the Old Testament so often quoted by the evangelists and apostles as the book of Proverbs; but they take no notice of Ecclesiasticus."

F. C — spoke of a young man who had seceded from the Scotch church, because he considered that their doctrine of particular redemption was of such a nature as to preclude, or at least discourage, a comprehensive effort for the salvation of all men.

*Chalmers.*—"I think your friend was mistaken in forming this conclusion. Certainly I do not hold the doctrine in any such sense as can involve this consequence. I am a predestinarian, because predestination is declared in Scripture; and I deem the 9th of Romans to be personal in its import, and not merely national; but it is a doctrine which relates to the counsels of God, and not to the practices of men. It may indeed be practically applied with great advantage, for the comfort and encouragement of faint-hearted believers; but it leaves all our duties absolutely untouched. The whole preceptive part of Scripture continues to bear upon us with undiminished force. I take the same view of the subject as Bishop Butler does. I believe the doctrine to be true; nevertheless, the Christian's course of duty is precisely the same as it would be if the doctrine were not true."

Since Dr. Chalmers thus carefully defines the province, and restricts the practical operation of the doctrine of predestination ; and since he boldly asserts that the law of God is written on the hearts of all men, it must, I think, be allowed, that he is a very moderate Calvinist.

The more we became familiarized to Dr. Chalmers' company, and observed the remarkable union which he presents of high talent and comprehensive thought, with an almost childlike modesty and simplicity, the more we admired him, as one notable example of that exquisite divine workmanship which so much fills his own contemplations. I may also add, that the more we became acquainted with his thorough amiability, the more we loved him.

He was to leave Earlham at a very early hour on the following morning. Before we retired to rest, we enjoyed a solemn parting half-hour, spent in the reading of a psalm, followed by silence, ministry, and prayer. I spoke a few sentences to him on the liberty of the Spirit, and on the supreme importance of our depending in all our religious services upon the guidance and influence of the Lord's anointed. Afterwards, I believe we

all united in heartily commending him, with his beloved wife and large family of daughters, to the grace and good keeping of the Lord.

I must not conclude this little memoir without just remarking, that our dear and honoured friend is a man of prayer. The prayers which he uttered in our family circle were concise, emphatic, and comprehensive, indicative of a very solemn sense of the holiness of God, and of the all-sufficiency of the one appointed mediation. I find myself often recurring to some of his concluding words,—“These petitions we humbly offer unto Thee, in the name of Him whom Thou hearest always. Amen.”

THE END.

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